

George Washington Papers, Series 2, Letterbooks 1754-1799

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, November 28, 1797.

Dear Sir' I have lately received a letter from a Mr. Small of Philadelphia, informing me that the Coach I used in the City, was yet unsold; that it was accumulating expence; and not more than two hundred dollars had been offered for it; when, according to his acct. \$300 was the value fixed thereon.

I intended to have sent his letter to you, but it has been mislaid, or lost. I shall beg the favour of you, however, to sell, or cause it to be sold, for whatever it will fetch. Who limited the price to \$300 I know not, but took it for granted that it had been disposed of many days ago. Receive, and place the proceeds to the credit of Dear Sir Your etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To JOHN LUZAC59**

Mount Vernon, December 2, 1797.

Sir: The letter for which I am indebted to your politeness, dated "Leyden the 10th. of September 1797" with the book which accompanied it, I had the pleasure to receive about three days since, and, in thanking you for both, I hasten to acknowledge the sense I have of the favorable sentiments you have been pleased to express of me.

To have steered my *Bark* amid the intricacies of variegated public employment to a haven of rest with an approving conscience; and while receiving the approbation of my

Library of Congress

59. Philologist and professor of Greek in the University of Leyden; editor in chief of the *Gazette de Leyde*.

own country for the part I have acted, to meet similar proofs of it from many of the moderate and virtuous of other countries consummates my greatest wish and all my ambition and in my eye is more precious than any thing, that Power or riches could have bestowed.

In times of turbulence, when the passions are afloat, calm reason is swallowed up in the extremes to wch. measures are attempted to be carried; but when those subside and the empire of it is resumed, the man who acts from principle, who pursues the paths of truth, moderation and justice, will regain his influence. Such, I persuade myself will be, if it has not already been, your case.

To the writings and conduct of men of this description (amongst whom you have always been placed) America is much indebted. And as a private citizen, for that is the class in which I now move, I offer you my thanks for the part you have acted, and for the Annals you have been pleased to record of one, who with pleasure subscribes himself your obedient, &c.

***To LOUIS DE LA COLOMBE⁶⁰**

Mount Vernon, December 3, 1797.

Sir: Your favour of the 21st. ulto.⁶¹ came duly to hand; for the pleasing and interesting contents of it, I offer you my best thanks; notwithstanding I had received by the same Mail, similar accounts from our Ministers at London and the Hague, inclosing extracts of letters to them from the Consul of the United States at Hamburgh.

Library of Congress

I congratulate you, on the happy event of the liberation of our mutual friend Genl. Lafayette, whose reception in this country will be, I am sure, cordial from all descriptions of people; from none more than myself.

The answer given by him to the Minister is noble, and worthy of himself. The only regret I should feel on his arrival in America (if it shd. happen soon) would be his disappointment at not finding his Son here. I said all I could, with decency, both to him and Mr. Frestel to induce their awaiting *direct* accounts from the Prisoners before their departure; but the eagerness of the former to embrace his Parents in the first moments of their release from a cruel imprisonment was not to be restrained. Among other arguments I observed that although it was not *probable*, yet it was at least *possible* that they might be crossing the Ocean in different directions at the same time. Unfortunate indeed would this be for both, especially the Son, should it so happen. Slow travelling, and a little delay at Hamburgh of Genl. Lafayette and family, *may* give time for the

60. A French émigré at Philadelphia. He had been adjutant general of the National Guard of France when Lafayette was in command of it.

61. In the *Washington Papers*.

arrival of the Son at Havre; and I hope it will be the case; for the shock must be great to both parties, if they should pass each other. With esteem &c.

PS. As the enclosure seems to have been a Paper transmitted for your satisfaction I return it at a [illegible].

***To WILLIAM VANS MURRAY**

Mount Vernon, December 3, 1797.

Library of Congress

Dear Sir: Your favors of the 26th of August (and a duplicate) and 16th. and 17th. of Sepr. with the enclosures have been duly received, and meet as they ought my particular thanks. The letter alluded to in the first is yet missing, but may notwithstanding get to hand.

I feel much obliged by your polite attention to me, and though from retirement you can receive little more in return from me than sincere friendship I shall hope for a continuation of your correspondence. I rarely stir from home, never beyond Alexandria or the Federal City; indeed if my inclinations were more extensive business would restrain them; for at no period of my life have I been more closely engaged (though more importantly employed) than during the months I have been at home. Hardly a resident for the last five and twenty years at this place, eight of them at file close thereof, I have found upon an examination into the state of my buildings, that time and want of attention (which short occasional Visits while I was in the Administration of Government allowed me not leizure to bestow) have caused such depredations thereon and every thing connected with them and have so deranged all matters of private concern, that what

with the plague and trouble proceeding from the number of workmen I have been obliged to employ, and of other matters little interesting to any but myself I have been occupied from the "rising of the sun to the setting of the same," and which as the wise man has said "may be all vanity and vexation of spirit," but as I did not seek it a source of happiness, but entered upon as a case of necessity, a line may be drawn between his disappointmts. and mine.

Your account and others, which I received about the same time of the liberation of Genl. De Lafayette, is interesting and highly pleasing. Should he with his family proceed immediately to America as is enjoined upon him by the Emperor he will experience one source of regret on his arrival, namely that his son sailed for Havre about the last of Octr. in expectation of finding him in Paris (from the measures the Directory had taken to obtain his releasement). I proceeded as far as a strong opposing opinion would allow me to induce him to await *direct* advice of this event from his father but his eagerness to

Library of Congress

embrace his parents and Sisters, in the first moments of their liberation; the belief that the Prisoners at Almutz were released, before it actually (as it seems) had happened; and conviction that he wou'd be under no embarrassments in France even if they were not, overcame all opposition. I went so far however as to observe, that it was *possible* though perhaps not *probable* that he and his friends might be upon the Ocean steering different courses at the same time. But as this, under the then appearance of things was not supposed likely to happen, his fear of a winter passage gave the preponderance, and on the 26th. of Octr. he set sail from New York for Havre de grace.

I am very glad to find that the Colleagues of General Pinckney had arrived safe in Holland, and that all three according to Newspaper accts. were set down in Paris. What their reception has been and what may be the issue of the negociation with which they are charged, is not for me to pronounce, the late revolution however at that place, will not introduce *them* under the most favorable auspices in my opinion; but this event like all other Acts of the French Government is extolled by men *amongst* us as a master piece of Vigilance, wisdom and patriotism. The means used to effect this are *not overlooked* , but applauded; of course then Constitution, like Treaties, are not obligatory when they become inconvenient. but I will quit politics and having nothing of a domestic nature to entertain you with shall soon put an end to my letter. Congress are in Session and as the Gazettes are transmitted to you, you will learn more from them than I could say. Mr. Izard I have not seen. The enclosed letters I take the liberty of committing to your care, and with compliments for Mrs. Murray in which Mrs. Washington unites, I remain with much truth, etc.

***To THE SECRETARY OF WAR**

Mount Vernon, January 2, 1798.

Dear Sir: This letter will be presented to you by Mr. Elliot, the son of a meritorious Officer in the Revolutionary War. He has equitable (if not legal) claim to Land. I have advised him

Library of Congress

to shew you the nature of it. If it is within your power to serve him, I am sure you will. If not, you can advise him as to the course best to be taken. Always, and sincerely, I am etc.

***To BARTHOLOMEW DANDRIDGE**

Mount Vernon, December 3, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 18th. of June has been duly received, and gave us the first certain acct. of your arrival in Holland, which we received with pleasure.

My family are much as you left them, and my avocations being altogether of a domestic nature I concern myself little in matters beyond my outer Inclosures; indeed I find enough to do within them, for upon a more critical examination of my buildings and appendages it has been discovered, that in a year or two more some of them wou'd not have been susceptible of repair. More by accident than design it was (luckily) discovered in time, that the great girder which supports the sleepers in my new room was so much decayed that a Company only moderately large wou'd have sunk altogether into the Cellar. In short I have been surrounded with workmen of different descriptions ever since I came home and am not yet done with them

and shall for some time to come have occasion for a Joiner.

As it may be in your power to give some explanation of the matter, I shall inform you that in looking over my public Accts. which you closed at Philadelphia, previously to your embarkation for Europe, I was surprized to find the following article of charge when but the April before I was similarly debited in a sum of two hundred and odd Dollars "By errors, losses and accounts paid at different times and omitted to be entered \$1147.15."

This is a large omission in the space of a twelve month; It wou'd require a number of small accounts to form such an aggregate, and the receipts to large ones ought to have corrected the error. I mention it however to see if you can furnish an explanation.

Library of Congress

We suppose your mother and friends are well because we have heard nothing to the contrary. Your brother William I know is, because I see him but a few days ago. Your Aunt and others of the family unite with me in very good wishes for your happiness and prosperity and with Affectionate regard etc.

P.S. Mrs. Peter has got another daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Law and their daughter are now here and well.

***To JOHN MARSHALL**

Mount Vernon, December 4, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your very interesting and obliging favor of the 15th. of September from the Hague, came duly to hand, and I thank you sincerely for the important details with which it is fraught, and pray for the continuation of them.

I congratulate you too on your safe arrival from Ship-board; and, as the Newspapers tell us, at Paris; and I wish in a little while hence I may have it in my power to do the same on the favourable conclusion of your Embassy, and happy return to your family and friends in this Country. To predict the contrary might be as unjust as it would be impolitic, and therefore, Mum, on that topic. Be the issue however, what it may, three things I shall be perfectly satisfied of; and these are, that nothing which justice, sound reasoning, and fair representation would require, will be wanting to render it just and honorable; and if it is not so, that the eyes of all, in this country, who are not wilfully blind, and resolved to remain so (some from one motive, and some from another), will be fully opened; and lastly, that if the French Directory proceed on the supposition that the parties in these United States are nearly equal, and that one of them would advocate their measures in the dernier resort, they will greatly deceive themselves; for the *Mass* of our Citizens require no more than to understand a question to decide it properly, and an adverse conclusion of the Negotiation will effect this. Indeed, I believe it may be said with truth, that a very great change in the

Library of Congress

public mind has taken place already. The leaders, it is true, attempt to keep up the Ball: which is evidently declining; but as both houses of Congress have formed quorums, and received the Presidents Speech, the response of the Representative branch will be some criterion by which this opinion of mine

may be tried, though not a conclusive one.

The situation of things in Holland is a good lesson for us, if we are disposed to profit by it; but unfortunately the nature of man is such, that the experience of others is not attended to as it ought to be; we must *feel ourselves* , before we can think, or perceive the danger that threatens; but as this letter (after it quits the Office of the Secretary of State, to whose care I shall send it) may pass through many hands, I shall dwell very little on European Politics. It is laughable enough, however, to behold those men, *amongst us* , who were reprobating in the severest terms, and sounding the Tocsin upon every occasion that a wild imagination could *torture* into a stretch of Power, or unconstitutionality in the Executive of the United States, all of a sudden become the warm advocates of those high handed measures of the French Directory which *succeeded* the arrestations on the 4th. of September: and this too without *denying* that the barriers of the constitution under which they acted have been *overleaped* , but do it on the ground of *tender mercy* , and an *unwillingness* to shed blood. But so it always has been, and I presume ever will be with men, who are governed more by passion and party views than by the dictates of justice, temperance and sound policy. If there were good grounds to suspect that the proscribed and banished characters were engaged in a conspiracy against the Constitution of the People's choice, to seize them even in an irregular manner, might be justified upon the ground of expediency, or self preservation; but after they

were secured and amenable to the Laws to condemn them without *a hearing; and consign them to punishment more rigorous perhaps than death* is the summit of despotism.

Library of Congress

A very severe winter has commenced. Since the first of November we have hardly experienced a moderate Day; heavy rains following severe frosts have done more damage to the Winter grain, now growing, than I recollect ever to have seen. At this moment and for several days past, all the Creeks and small waters are hard bound with Ice, and the Navigation of the River, if not entirely stopped is yet, very much impeded by it. The Crops of Indian Corn in the lower parts of the State, have been uncommonly great: midway of it, tolerably good; but under the Mountains and above them, extremely bad, with partial exceptions. The Wheaton Crop, in quantity turned out better than was expected; in quality remarkable fine; the white or early wheat, weighing from 60, to 64 lb. pr. bushel.

The Virginia assembly is, or ought to be, in Session; but what the temper of it is I know not. Its composition you must be better acquainted with than I am.

Young Lafayette, too fondly led by his eagerness to embrace his Parents and Sisters in the first moments of their releasement from Prison; and unintentionally deceived by premature accounts from his frds. at Hamburg, that this event had actually taken place; embarked for this purpose on the 26th. of Octr. at New York for Havre de Grace. Since which, official accts. having been received of the terms on which his liberation was granted

by the Emperor the meeting in Europe is become problematical; a circumstance, should it happen, which will be sorely regretted on both sides. I said all I could to induce him to wait here until he should receive a *direct* advice from his father but his impatience on the one hand, and his confidence in the information he had received that his Parents were on their way to Paris, on the other, his apprehensions from a winter passage, and belief that, he should not be illy received in France; even if they were not there, turned the scale against my opinion and advice that he should postpone his departure until he heard *from* him or one of the family. With very great esteem etc.

***To CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY**

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, December 4, 1797.

My dear Sir: With much pleasure I received your letter of the 19th. of September from Rotterdam; and that pleasure proceeded in a great measure from the congeniality of sentiments which prevail between you and Genl. Marshall; having taken the liberty of introducing him to you as a Gentleman, in whom you might place entire confidence.

What has been the reception of the Embassy by the French Directory, is, to me, unknown; and what will be the result of it, is not for me to predict. The change, however, which took place at Paris on the 4th of

September adds nothing to my hope of a favourable issue. In this I *may* be mistaken; but of another thing I am certain I shall not, and that is, that the failure (if such be the case) cannot be attributed to the want of justice on the part of the United States or from the want of an able representation of it, on the part of their Negotiators. Of course the issue must be favourable, or conviction will be produced in all, except those who do not want to be convinced, that we have nothing to expect from the justice of the Nation with whom we are treating. In either case we shall ascertain our ground.

That the Government of France views us as a divided people, I have little doubt; and that they have been led to entertain that opinion from representations, and the conduct of many of our own citizens, is still less doubtful; but I shall be very much mistaken, indeed, in the mass of the People of the United States, if an occasion should call for an unequivocal expression of the public voice, if the first wd. not find themselves very much deceived; and the latter (their leaders excepted) to change their notes. I pray devoutly that the Directory may not bring the matter to trial.

I have received the letter and Book62 from Mr. Luzac of Leyden, which are mentioned in yours, and have offered him my thanks for both, in a letter put under cover to Mr. Murray at

Library of Congress

the Hague, expressive also of the sense I entertain of his uniform and friendly sentiments towards these United States.

Mr. Izard, I have not yet seen, if he should call upon me on his way to Charleston I shall be very happy; on many accts.; to shew him all the civility in my power. The enclosed for young

62. The title is not mentioned either in Luzac's or Pinckney's letters, but it is probably the volume listed in the "Inventory &c. of Articles at Mount Vernon," made by the appraisers of Washington's estate, as "Luzac's Oration."

Lafayette I must request your care of. Having received premature advice (from some of his correspondants in Hamburgh) of the liberation of his father and friends, his eagerness to embrace them in the first moments of it, could not be restrained; although I endeavoured to convince him that it would be more prudent to await the confirmation from *themselves* ; and among other things observed to him, that although it was not *probable* , still it was *possible* , that his Parents might be on their Voyage to America whilst he was seeking them in Europe. Should this prove to be the case (as appears not unlikely from the injunction of the Emperor) it will be a matter of sore regret to both. The confidence however, which he placed in his information; the advancement of the Season, and his fear of a Winter passage; gave the preponderancy to his inclination over my opinion. He is a sensible and well disposed young man, full of filial affection and every sentiment to render him estimable.

Information with respect to public matters, will go to you from a more direct, and purer fountain than mine, I mean from the Department of State; and that which more immediately concerns myself, is too unimportant to trouble you with, further than to assure you, which I can do with much truth, that in your public mission, and in your private capacity, I wish you all the success, and prosperity that your heart can desire; and that with the greatest sincerity I am, etc.⁶³

Library of Congress

63. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, of New York City.

***To FELIX FRESTAL**

Mount Vernon, December 4, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your conjunct letters from New York and 2nd: of Novr. from Sea, and your seperate letter of the 22d. of October⁶⁴ from the former place, have all been received with that satisfaction which I shall always feel in hearing that you are well, and happy; as I sincerely wish you may be in a meeting of your friends in the bosom of your native Country.

For the flattering terms in which you have expressed your sense of the civilities, which your merits alone independent of the consideration of being the mentor and companion of our young friend, richly entitled you to, I offer you my thanks. And for the sentiments of friendship with which you are pleased to honor me, I shall always entertain a lively and grateful remembrance. You carried with you the regrets of the whole family, at parting; and I can assure you Sir, that if you should visit America again we shall feel very happy in seeing you under this roof; and in your walks.

Except the commencement (if we are to judge from appearances) of a very hard Winter, nothing have occurred since you left us, which is at all interesting. The branches of this family with which you are acquainted, remain in Statu quo; except that Mrs. Peter has added another daughter to the Stock, and my nephew Lawrence Washington a wife to his bosom; at the ceremonial of which Lawrence Lewis attended, and is not yet returned.

I will engross no more of your time than while I can assure you, of the very great esteem etc.

64. All three of these letters from George Washington Motier Lafayette and Frestal are in the *Washington Papers*.

***To GEORGE WASHINGTON MOTIER LAFAYETTE**

Mount Vernon, December 5, 1797.

My dear George: With that pleasure which I shall always feel at hearing from you, or of any thing which may contribute to your happiness, I received your several letters from New York, dated in October and that of the 2d. of November from Sea, by Mr. Latimer. If my best vows would have contributed to a prosperous Voyage, and a happy meeting with your Parents and Sisters in France, both must have happened to the utmost extent of your wishes 'ere this, for they were offered on the Altar of Sincerity; and are now followed with assurances that, if you should ever return to America again, that you will find the same cordial reception within the Walls of this Mansion, as you have heretofore experienced.

Great as my wishes are that you may have met with your Parents in France, I am not without fear, from our late accounts that you have been disappointed. How far the event which took place in Paris, on the 4th. of September, may have effected their prospects in that Country, is not for me (who knows so little of the principles which governed on that occasion) to express any opinion thereon; but as I have seen an official report from the American Consul at Hamburgh, of the terms on which the Prisoners at Olmutz were released, the proceedings of your Parents after their arrival at Hamburgh, is rendered equivocal with us.

Few things have occurred, since you left us which merit attention, except an earlier Winter than has almost ever been known; for since the beginning of November we have scarcely experienced a moderate day; and at this moment

Library of Congress

the Mercury in Fahrenht. is standing at 10° only above 0. The Creeks and smaller Waters are all shut up, and the navigation of the River is much impeded by Ice.

Mrs. Peter has added another daughter to the family and both mother and child are well, as are Mr. and Mrs. Law and their child, who are now here on a visit before their departure for Philadelphia, at which place they propose to spend the Winter. The younger parts of this family are also in good health, and unite most cordially with me in tendering you their best wishes, to which I add assurances of the sincere friendship and affectionate regard of Yours etc.

P.S. As you noticed in one of your letters from New York Christopher's excursion to Bethlehem, I have pleasure in informing you, that he derived so much aid from the medicine he took as to have remained perfectly well ever since; and has placed such confidence in his Doctrs. skill, that he wou'd not again dispair of being cured of the bite of a mad dog; if the Hydrophoby was strong upon him.

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Mount Vernon, December 5, 1797.

My dear Sir: Not knowing when, where or whether ever this letter may reach your hands the contents will be small, and the purport merely congratulatory on your releasement from a cruel imprisonment; the official acct. of which

we have at length received.

On what principle you have undergone this rigorous treatment, I have been unable to divine, but be this as it may, no one rejoices more than I do that a period is put to it.

By the Gazettes we are informed and it is confirmed by the American Consul at Hamburg, who received it from the imperial Minister, that you were to proceed immediately from

Library of Congress

Olmutz to that place where eight days only was allowed you to remain before you were enjoined to embark for America or steer for Holland; thus far and no further are we informed and under this alternative we are unable to decide, since the event of the 4th. of Sept. at Paris, what has been your choice. If to come to this Country it will be a matter of extreme regret that your Son led by an ardent desire and premature advice of your liberation, has flown to France in hopes and expectation of embracing his Parents and Sisters in the first moments of their releasement. If the latter, the meeting with such a Son deserving of all your care and attention must be supremely happy; and may considered I hope as an indication of a favorable disposition to receive you again into the bosom of your country. Viewing the matter on either point it renders a further expression of my sentiments unnecessary: for if by going to Holland you shou'd meet your son he will present a letter from me to you, of which he is the bearer: on the other hand if you should proceed from Hamburg to America, this letter which I shall also put

under cover to George, cannot find you in Europe. I shall only add therefore, that if the latter shou'd happen to be the case, that of all the numerous friends which you will find here none will greet you, Madam Lafayette and your daughters with a more sincere and cordial welcome than myself and all parts of this family would do. all of whom have felt for your suffering and rejoice exceedingly that a period is so far put to them, as to be released from a cruel imprisonment; to go further in assurances of my friendship and regard would be unnecessary, as you must be convinced of the affectionate attachment of him who has been always Sincerely Yours.

P.S. Mrs. Washington Unites with me in respectful complts., and every good wish for you Madam Delafayette and Daughters.⁶⁵

***To RUFUS KING**

Mount Vernon, December 6, 1797.

Library of Congress

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 6th. of September has been duly received, and for the information contained in the enclosure, respecting Genl. Lafayette, I offer you my thanks. The footing on which his releasement is placed by the Emperor, and the succeeding event in Paris, on the 4th of September, renders his proceedings after he gets to Hamburgh, problematical.

Should these circumstances (for it is not easy to say what effect the latter may have

65. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

on his prospects in France) induce him to steer his course immediately for this Country, it will be a matter of sore regret to him, and his Son, that they shall have passed each other on the Ocean.

Deluded (though not designedly) by premature information of his parents liberation and journeying to France, by a correspondent at Hamburgh, his eagerness to embrace them, and his Sisters, in the first moments of their reception in France; the fear of a Winter passage (should he delay his departure); and persuasion, as he left his native country under the authority of the Government, that he had nothing to apprehend from his return to it; overcame my advice to him to await a *direct* account from his father which would not only have ascertain'd the fact but might also have pointd. out a course which he would have him pursue. Nay, I went so far as to tell him, that although it was not probable, it was nevertheless possible, he might be disappointed of his object, by the means which seems likely to have happened; but his purpose, from the considerations already mentioned, were not to be diverted and being excited by the purest filial affection, for he is really a sensible, amiable, and valuable youth, I shall feel much for the disappointment of both parties, if they do not meet in Europe. With the highest esteem etc.

[N.Y.H.S.]

***To THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, December 11, 1797.

Dear Sir: At the sametime that I acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 20th. Ultio. enclosing a translation of the Spanish letter, and one from Mr. King let me beg the favour of you to forward these which go under cover with this, to their respective Addresses, along with your own if you should have occasion to write soon to our public characters abroad; or by the first conveyances if you should not. That to Sir John Sinclair I wish, more than the others, might be forwarded soon.

The probability is that young Lafayette will be disappointed in his expectation of meeting his parents and Sisters in France, or even in Europe. I said everything to him I could, with decency to induce him to await *direct* advice from his father, before he departed from this Country. I even went so far before the condition annexed to his releasement by the Emperor was known, or the Explosion in Paris was suspected, to tell him that altho' the event was not probable, it nevertheless was possible, that he might be going to Europe when his relations were coming to America, and endeavoured to impress the idea upon him that the moment his father was in a situation to write to him that he would; and more than probable point out the course he would have him pursue; but having received letters from some of his correspondents in Europe, informing him of his liberation, and that he was actually on his journey to Paris, his

eagerness to see them could no longer be restrained particularly as delay might involve him in a Winters passage, of which he was affraid, and having come out under the authority of the French Government, because he was under no apprehension of ill treatment, if the information he had received was premature.

It will, however, be a matter of sore disappointment and regret, if his Parents have embarked for America before he sees them in Europe, and will be a source of much

Library of Congress

concern to me also, for he is an amiable and sensible youth; and his eagerness to go, the effect of ardent filial and fraternal affection, and a longing desire to embrace them in the first moments of their liberation from cruel captivity. The disappointment will be as sorely felt by his Parents if they should miss each other.

I hope the calm, with which this Session of Congress has commenced, will not be succeeded by a storm; I shall confess however that my expectations fall far short of my hopes on this occasion. Tranquility will not continue to the end of it; nor can harmony be looked for, while the same men who were sounding the Tocsin at everything that a wild imagination could construe into even a *tendency* to stretch the Powers of Government here, are advocating the most outrageous violations of it, elsewhere. But no conduct is too absurd, or inconsistent for some men, to give into. To hasten (as you will perceive) to get my letters to the Post office in time; I am with very great Esteem etc.

***To RICHARD PARKINSON**

Mount Vernon, December 15, 1797.

Sir: Since my last of the 28th Ult, a copy of which you will find on the other side I have received your letter of the 27th. of Septr: to which I find little to add, further than to assure you, that it would be very pleasing to me to have my Farms in the hands of skilful Agriculturists, who are *able* and *willing* , to manage them properly. Such if their capitol be sufficient to afford me the necessary security, might enter upon mine with very convenient advantages, as the draught Cattle, stock of every kind and farming implements, or such parts thereof as they might want and I could spare, might go along with the farms at a reasonable valuation; to be paid for at such time or times, and in such manner as may be agreed upon; all of which being on the spot, and assimilated to the Farms, would be convenient to any one, but infinitely more so to a stranger, on his arrival, who would and perhaps without knowing where, have these things to provide, to enable him to prosecute his plan of husbandry.

Library of Congress

From the plans of my farms, which have been shewn you by Sir John Sinclair, you will have perceived that they are large, and require a good deal of force to carry on the various operations of them, I mention this circumstance to caution you against an expectation which you might otherwise have entertained, that labourers in this, as in

the old Countries are *a/ways* to be had: The case is otherwise, and besides the difficulty of getting them, their wages (unless you were to employ slaves) and these are not to be had but by the year (and not always then) are high.

For the reasons mentioned in my last letter, there is scarcely a doubt but that that three of my farms will be unengaged from *hence* untill the *first of May* ; and if other Farmers were disposed to follow your fortunes, they might be accommodated also. Nor, as the farms are large, am I indisposed to a division of them into many smaller tenements if the measure would be more agreeable, and a plan could be adopted. I am etc.

***THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY**

Mount Vernon, December 17, 1797.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 24th. Ult. has been duly received; but one cause or another has prevented the acknowledgment until now, when I thank you for the Presidents Speech which it enclosed, and your obliging offer to render me any services I might need, in Phila.

One reason why I did not sooner notice the offer of a Mr. Barker to pay you on my A/c \$500 in behalf of Coloni Shreve, was my expectation that Mr. Ross, for whom I had

deposited a letter in Colo. Pickerings hands, to remain there until his arrival, would have been in Philadelphia long 'ere this, and have settled all that business. If, however, it should have happened that Mr. Ross is yet absent, I would thank you for receiving and remitting me the \$500 above mentioned; and further, as he has received more money on

Library of Congress

my account from Colonel Shreve, you would oblige me (if it be convenient for you to do so) to receive the whole amount there, and give me an order for the like sum in Alexandria.

It is time, now, to hear what the reception of our Envoys at Paris has been; and what their prospects are. It surely cannot be, that Fauchet and Adet are appointed by the Directory to negotiate with them! If the fact however, be otherwise, it requires not the spirit of Divination to predict the Issue.

I cannot conclude without offering you my condolence, and I do it sincerely, on the death of your worthy, and much respected father. As it was an event however, which for sometime has been expected, you could not have been unprepared for the stroke; and amidst the affliction, you have the consolation to know that he died "full of years and honours" and regretted, by all who knew him. With best respects for Mrs. Wolcott, in which I am joined by Mrs. Washington and Nelly Custis, I am etc.⁶⁷

67. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Mrs. James W.T. McCrea, of East Rockaway, Long Island, N.Y.

***To BUSHROD WASHINGTON**

Mount Vernon, December 18, 1797.

My Dear Bushrod: Your letter of the 26th. ulto. came safe in the usual course of the mail, and about a week ago Mrs. Forbes arrived; and from her appearance, and conduct hitherto, gives satisfaction to your aunt. Having, as she says, obtained ten dollars of you, to defray her expences to this place; I herein return them, with thanks for the aid it afforded to get her here. and as you may have paid for the copies of sundry papers taken from the Records of the General Court, let me know the amount, and it shall be remitted also.

About a month ago, a Mr. Woodward, living, according to his own account, at Greenbrier Courthouse, presented draughts (of which the enclosed are copies) from the Sheriff

Library of Congress

of Kanhawa for taxes of my land in, that County. As I was unacquainted with the Law imposing these; with the drawer; presenter of them; and certifier that Alderson was the Sheriff of that County, I did not incline to pay the amount without making further enquiry into the matter. Upon this he informed me that I might obtain the necessary information at the Treasury, or Auditor's Office in Richmond; to which the returns were made, and where the money might be, and often was, paid, instead of doing it to the Sheriff of the Back counties, by Non-residents. You would oblige me by making this enquiry, and if the taxes are correctly stated, and the amount of them can be paid with propriety in Richmond, to inform me thereof; and measures shall be taken as soon as I am in Cash,

to discharge the same. The enclosed paper, after it has enabled you to make the necessary enquiry, may be returned to me again. The family here, join me in offering you and Mrs. Washington the compliments of the approaching festival and I am with much truth Your sincere friend and affectionate uncle.

***To JOHN MASON**

Mount Vernon, January 2, 1798.

Sir: I am just informed by the President of the Potomac Company, that the application to the Maryland Assembly on be half of that Company, for aid to complete their works, has met with much delay, and even at this time, is uncertain in its event. A circumstance which I learn with no small regret.

Understanding also, from the same source, that some persons have expressed a doubt whether I still entertain the same favourable opinion of the importance of the Navigation of the Potomac that I formerly did. I take the liberty, Sir, (as you are at Annapolis) of troubling you with a repetition [*sic*] of the opinion which I have invariably expressed, concerning the advantages of that undertaking; and you have my permission to communicate it whenever

Library of Congress

it may be necessary and proper, to obviate any doubts as mentioned above, or even otherwise promote the interest of the Company.

So far from being less sanguine than I formerly was, of the many and great advantages which will accrue from completing the navigation of the Potomack, I

have every day additional reason for supporting my former opinion, and new proof of its advantages extending beyond the calculation of the most sanguine.

To the States of Virginia and Maryland it offers benefits too obvious to mention, and too numerous, to detail in a letter. To the United States, as well as to the two before Mentioned, it holds out the desireable advantage of perhaps the most direct and easiest communication between the Waters of the Atlantic States and the Western country. To the Stockholders, the completion of the work promises an ample increasing, and secure interest.

Under these impressions, it is astonishing to me, that, if the State can, conveniently spare the means, there should be wanting (unless the measure appears differently in the eyes of its Representatives) the disposition to complete this great and interesting work, especially too as the money already expended must be lost, without the addition of a comparatively small sum to finish the object; and especially also, as the few Individuals who at this time have the command of money find so many objects in which they can employ it to immediate advantage that they cannot be induced to come forward in aid, however flattering the future emoluments may be. Wishing you success. I am etc.

***To ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD**

Mount Vernon, January 9, 1798.

Dear Sir: A few days ago, Mr. Herbert handed me your letter of the 30th. Ult. with the Papers to which it refers; and for the trouble you have lead in that business, I offer you,

Library of Congress

and General Posey also, when you have an opportunity of presenting them, my best thanks for the parts you have respectively acted therein.

Having perused the Papers attentively, and, fortunately, having by me, the original Patents which were granted to Doctr. Skinner, with the original surveys also, which were made for John Sanders, on which the Patents for 2000 and 3000 acres issued to the Doctor, I have been enabled to discover to my entire satisfaction, that I am not at all affected by Mr. Stephens's entry, Survey, or present claim.

It appears by the Surveys (two of them for 2000 Acres each, returned on the same sheet of paper, one dated the 20th and the other the 24th of Feby 1784) that the tract of 3000, and the lower survey of 2000 Acres on rough Creek (the two for which Doctr. Skinner obtained Patents, and is now held by me, in virtue of my purchase from Genl. Lee), are too remote from Mr. Stephens's Survey to be injured by it. How far his claim may affect the upper Survey made for Sanders of 2000 Acres, I know not; nor is it necessary for me to enquire having no interest therein.

But to place the matter in a more perspicuous point of view, I have, from the surveys above mentioned, laid the three tracts down in a connected form, by which it will appear at the first glance, that it is the upper tract *only* (to whom belonging I know not)

which can come in contact with Mr. Stephens land: and as that Gentleman is unknown to me, and you have correspondents, or acquaintances in that Country, through any one or another of whom you could inform him of the real state of the case, I would thank you for giving him these explanations that neither *he*, nor I may be embarrassed hereafter in the disposition of our Lands.

I have not retd. the Papers which you sent me by Mr. Herbert; but if you should be of opinion that they will be useful in explaining matters more fully to Mr. Stephens, they can be sent to you by the first Post after notice thereof is given to me.

Library of Congress

My best regards, in which those of Mrs. Washington and the family are united, are presented to Mrs. Spotswood and all with you, and I am etc.

***To ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD**

(Confidential)

Mount Vernon, January 9, 1798.

Dear Sir: The attention which the Papers you transmitted, required I should give them, and the form which my land assumed by connecting the two tracts together, evinces most dearly, the necessity there is of my becoming possessed of Andrew Wodrows 300 Acre tract, which is surrounded thereby, if attainable.

If you can, therefore, be instrumental in

making the purchase on my behalf, it would render me an acceptable favour. The price (but this under the rose) must not be regarded, unless in comparing it with that of the circumjacent lands, and other circumstances, it should appear enormous.

I could wish however (if an opportunity offers) that you would talk with, or write to, Major George Lewis on this subject; because, as he was authorised at least two years ago to make this purchase for me, there might be an interference, between your Agent and his, that might serve to enhance the price, and render the purchase more difficult.

If you recollect the width, and kind of Navigation at, and from these lands of mine to the Green River, and have heard how it is from thence to the Ohio, I would thank you for information respecting them: And if you know what sort of land lyes opposite to mine, on the North side of rough Creek; to whom it belongs, and at what price it probably could be bought; I would thank you for information on this head also. To add, by a line from D to G, all the land with in, would give shape, as well as quantity to my lands; and secure the

Library of Congress

entire Command of the Water, of the Above Creek, (if Wodrows land be purchased) for more than Six Miles. With very great esteem etc.⁷¹

71. From a photostat of the original in Cornell University Library.

***To BURWELL BASSETT**

Mount Vernon, January 10, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 22d Ult^o. came duly to hand. As Mr. Burwell is disinclined to part with his Cook, and Colo. Finnie's⁷⁴, is too much incumbered with a family, I must make the best shift I can with those I have; and indeed, with a housekeeper that understands that business, I believe it is best that I should do so.

As you kindly offered to become the purchaser of Corn for me, in case I should need any for my Distillery, I now request the favour of you to procure, and send me (not of the gourd seed kind) a Vessel load, say from five to twelve hundred bushels, so soon as all danger of the River, freezing, is over. I shall be enabled, I expect, to pay for the Corn on delivery; but a month or two after, would suit me better. I had rather the Vessel should have no Corn in it but mine; and I expect the price exclusive of freight, will not exceed fifteen shillings pt. barrel, and twelve and six pence would suit my finances much better. Let me hear, as soon as convenient, what is likely to be the result of this application. With great esteem etc.

74. Col. William Finnie.

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, January 10, 1798.

Dear Sir: By leaving the enclosed letter to Mr. Kitt (who was my household Steward in Philadelphia) open for your perusal, it supercedes the necessity of my saying more on the

Library of Congress

subject than to beg your attention to and aid in the measure which is requested therein. Mr. Kitt lives, I believe, at the United States Bank, and if not, Mr. Wolcot, I am persuaded can inform you of the place of his residence.

Pray send a set of strings for Miss Custis's Harpsichord agreeably to the enclosed Memm. under cover to me by the first Post, and at the sametime inform me at what price good German and other Oznabrigs could be bought by the quantity. and that I may not, at any time over draw, or order goods please to let me know how my acct. stands with you. With great esteem etc.

***To ALEXANDER WHITE**

Mount Vernon, January 11, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 8th has been duly received, and I now write, more for the purpose of acknowledging the receipt of it, than from any sentiment I have to communicate relative to the Public buildings in the Federal City.

You are perfectly acquainted with my sentiments on that subject already, and if not, they may be comprised in a few words, thus: every effort should be made to obtain the means, and every exertion used (in the short time left) to accomplish the end, for which they are obtained. And, if they could be had without applying to Congress, I should prefer it; but, if this is impracticable (of which you are the best judges) then to do it; because there is no alternative, and because no event is more to be deprecated than the arrestation of the buildings, or a limping progress of them this year.

If the answer which the Commissioners expect from the President, should result in your journey to Philadelphia, I shall sincerely wish you all the success your assiduity in, and management of the business will entitle you to. If you should not go thither, or from Frederick if you do, I shall hope to see you in George Town at the meeting of the Stock

Library of Congress

holders of the Potomack Navigation, the 8th. of next month, by notification; for I think that business requires serious attention also, and perhaps amendment, or explanation of the licence to a subordinate, or other Company, to open the navigation of the River Shanondoah; having understood that the Resolution entered into at the last General meeting of the Potomack Company, relative to this matter, has not had the effect wch. was expected, or, that in [*sic*] lingers at least. With great esteem etc.

***To THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, January 12, 1798.

Dear Sir: Permit me to request your care of the enclosed letter to Mr. Williams, our Consul at Hamburgh, in answer to a very polite and civil one informing me of the arrival of Genl. Lafayette and family at that place. Allow me also to ask the favour of you to send me Colo. Monroe's, and Mr. Fauchet's Pamphlets; and if you have leisure (not else) to let me know what the public sentiment respecting them, is. In one of these, or in some other way, I find by a writer in the Richmond Paper, a private letter of mine to Mr. Gouvern. Morris is given to the public. If given fairly, with the cause which produced it, I have no doubt of its operating against the measure it was intended to promote.

As Silver could not be transmitted in a letter, and I had no other small notes, I send two of the Bank of Columbia, to pay for the Pamphlets. Yours always.

***To GOVERNOR JAMES WOOD**

Mount Vernon, January 12, 1798.

Dear Sir: This letter will be presented to your Excellency by Mr. Lear, President of the Potomack Company, who waits on the Legislature to solicit the loan of a sum of money to enable the Stock holders to proceed with vigour, to the completion of an Enterprise

Library of Congress

so great, honourable and useful, as is that of laying open the shortest and easiest communication between the Atlantic States and the

extensive Country westward of us, on the Waters of Ohio. A communication which will be found not less beneficial than honourable for the States of Virginia and Maryland to encourage.

Mr. Lear has other matters relative to the Falls &ca. to lay before that Honble. body, equally claiming its attention.

Such facility as your Excellency can, with propriety give to these important objects, will not, I persuaded myself, be wanting.

Permit me to introduce Mr. Lear to your notice and civilities, and to assure you of the respect and regard etc.

***To FRANCIS DEAKINS**

Mount Vernon, January 15, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 28th of Decr. with a P.S. of the 7th. instr. was delivered to me the 12th by Mr. Lear, with ninety one dollars enclosed therein on A/c of Rent due from Mrs. Beall, together with a statement of the A/c against her by Mr. Veatch.

I ought also, though late, and indeed to my shame for the delay, to acknowledge that your obliging letter of the 26th of Decr. 1796 came safe to my hands; but at a time (during the busy scenes of Congress) when I had no leisure to attend to private business, and laying by for a more convenient moment it had escaped me altogether until a revision of some papers the other day brought it to light again.

Library of Congress

Let me now; my good Sir, request the favour of you alone, or in conjunction with Mr. Veatch, to fix the value of the Tobo. due from Mr. Beall to me in money. In doing wch. permit me to assure you, that you cannot fail in giving *me* satisfaction, as I had rather you should *under* than *over* rate it in *her* case having no disposition to bear hard upon the Widow, but on the contrary to favor her.

It would much oblige me also if Mr. Veatch under your superintendence and concurrence would settle with *all* the *Tenants* up to the close of the last year (1797) and convert (if they have not the Tobacco to pay) the balances of Tobacco into cash at a reasonable rate, making an aggregate sum with other charges in money and reducing the same to specialties (with securities if necessary) that I may start anew from the commencement of the present year.

And as you and he are much better judges than I am, of what would be a reasonable cash rent for the Tenants respectively, to pay, I leave it to you also to file what each shall pay for the present year, and until altered (if just for both parties) after a few years have elapsed, and whatever you shall do in the premises I will abide by.

A settlement with, and a specialty from Mr. Jones should also be had. If he has paid all the Tobacco, and Cash which he has received on my A/c he can be at no loss I presume, to produce vouchers for the same and it is necessary that the account with him should be closed.

Mr. Veatch will keep the specialties in his own hands for collection furnishing me with a list thereof and their amount. His commission on these will be the same as if they were not reduced to specialties. With very great esteem etc.

***To BUSHROD WASHINGTON**

Mount Vernon, January 19, 1798.

Library of Congress

My dear Bushrod: Your letter of the 8th instant came to hand opportunely, as Mr. Augustus Woodward (in whose favour the Sheriff of Kanhawa had drawn for the taxes of my lands in that County) was here on his return from Philadelphia, and received the full amount of his draught.

I am perfectly at a loss to know what is meant by the Auditors, A/c as coming from "The Sheriff of Greenbrier who says he has returned a tract of land the property of Genl. George Washington Esqr, amounting to 15940 acres for non-payment of the Revenue tax due thereon, for the year 1789. The tax is. £35:17:3."

I neither do, or ever did, hold such a tract, and must request the favour of you to investigate this matter; and that you may be enabled to do it with accuracy, I enclose you a list of all the lands I hold in *this State* on the Western waters, with the dates of Patents; to whom granted, for what quantity, and in what coun

ties they are supposed to lye at the time they were surveyed. By which you will perceive, first that I have no such tract in *any* county, and 2d. that no two or more of those, contained in the list, will make the exact quantity of 15940.

The Sheriff, in his draught on me in favour of A. Woodward, does not specify the quantity of Acres I hold on the Kanhawa; but the number of tracts *only*, on which the taxes are due for the years 1791, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 1796: and for 2 tracts *only* on the River Ohio, when there are three tracts on that river; This puts it out of my power to know whether I am justly dealt by, or not; and it would seem by some calculation and figures on a piece of paper (which I return that I am charged for more land than I ever held there.⁷⁵ A small tract of 240 acres between the Representative of Genl. Andrew Lewis and myself, is there inserted also. Pray what is the state of that matter? No tax has ever been demanded of me, therefor, and it may, for ought I know to the contrary, be in jeopardy likewise. It contains the burning spring. Several matters relative to these lands want explanation, and you would oblige me

Library of Congress

by endeavouring to obtain it, and for this purpose, as it may assist I return all the Papers you sent me.

By comparing them you will find that Sheriff Alderson charged taxes for the years 1791 a 1796, both inclusive, for four tracts on the Kanhawa and two on the Ohio: and that the Sheriff of Greenbrier returns 15940 for non-payment of the Revenue tax, for the year 1789. What becomes of the tax 1790 on all

75. Washington inserted an asterisk (*) here and noted in the margin: "See under Kanawha land and remarks."

these lands; or was there any? Why return 15940 acres, and not the whole when all were under the same predicament? Why are two tracts on the Ohio charged, and the third not? except it should be in another Cry.⁷⁶ The enclosed list contains those on the one, as well as the other River; and if (as I conceive ought to have been the case with the Sheriff, and I suppose is so at the Auditors Office) the number of Acres in each tract, and at what assessed had been inserted, these difficulties might have been removed without giving you the trouble I am about to do in examining the aforesaid Office; but as there is a cloud over the business; as I am as willing to comply with the Laws, as I receive justice in the execution of them. As I wish to have a full understanding of the case, of both, and shall not willingly, nor neglectedly, or knowingly put it in the power of any one to deprive me of my property, through any failure on my part, I must beg the favour of you to obtain from the Auditor at your and his leisure, provided I put nothing to hazard by the delay, a complete statement of the taxes *on all the land* mentioned in the list I enclose; the small tract of 587 Acres I had almost forgot, though extremely valuable for its size. With sincere and Affectionate regard, etc.

P.S. Since writing the foregoing letter, wch as you will readily perceive is done in much haste I find I was mistaken in saying none of the tracts united

Library of Congress

76. The phrase after the interrogation mark is inserted in the margin by Washington.

would make 15940 Acres, those of 10990, 2950 and 2000 do this. I send you \$120 to pay the £35 17.3 and 7/. Tax for Lots, though I did not know that any thing was due on the latter. nor do I believe any tax has ever been paid on the 587 acre tract, or others before.

***LANDS BELONGING TO GEORGE WASHINGTON ON THE WESTERN WATERS IN THE STATE OF VIRGINIA**

Mount Vernon, January 1798.

Great Kanhawa. Fincastle County

10990 Acrs. Near the mouth thereof. Granted by Letters Patent to George Washington the 15th. day of December 1772: and confirmed after the Revolution, by other letters Patent the 6th. of July 1784, in consequence of a friendly Petition for the same, by Burwell Bassett Esqr. for the non-performance of the Act requiring certain improvements

7276 acs. Higher up the Kanhawa. Granted to George Washington and George Muse⁷⁷ as above, on the 1st. day of Decr. 1773; and said to lye in the County of Botetourt.

2950 acs. Opposite the mouth of Cole River, and still higher up the Kanhawa, and sd. to be in Greenbrier County. Granted the 12th. day of April 1784 to G: Washington

2000 Acs. On the Fork between Ohio River and Kanhawa in the above county of Greenbrier; granted to Geo: Washington 12th. Aprl. 1784

—

Total 23,216

Library of Congress

Besides the above mentioned tracts, there is a small tract of (I believe) 240 acres Granted (the date of the Patent I know not) to Genl. Andrew Lewis

77. "Muse's moiety conveyed to Washington afterwards." This is a marginal note by Washington.

and myself, containing the burning Spring, on or near the Kanhawa River in Greenbrier County.

On the Ohio River. Botetourt County

2314 Acres The first large bottom below the little Kanhawa. Granted by letters Patent to George Washington the 15th. Decr. 1772. And regranted after a friendly Petition of Burwell Bassett Esqr. for non-compliance with the Act of Improvement the 6th. of July 1784.

2448 Acs. Fourth large bottom of the Ohio below the mouth of the little Kanhawa, and about 16 miles below the above granted to Geo: Washington 15th. Decr. 1772, and regranted as above 6th. July 1784.

4298 Acrs. Fifth large bottom below the Mo. of little Kanhawa, on the Ohio, and just above the Great Bend Granted, and regranted to Geo Washington on the days and years above mentioned.

—

Total 9157 All said to lye in the County of Bottetourt

587 Acs. About 15 miles below Wheling in the County of 78 formerly Augusta. Granted George Washington by Patent bearing date the 30th. Oct 1784.79

>

***To JAMES ROSS**

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, January 22, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 12th Instr. has been duly received; and an Order from the Treasury of the United States and the Collector of the Port of Alexandria for \$1,961.30 has also

78. Left blank in the manuscript.

79. This description of these lands, as noted, were inclosed in the letter to Bushrod Washington, Jan. 19, 1798.

been received; a receipt for which (for your satisfaction, or that of Colo. Shreve) is herein enclosed; with my acknowledgements, and thanks for your kindness in negotiating this business for me. The delay, occasioned by the indisposition of Mrs. Ross, has been attended with no inconvenience to me; and on her happy recovery from it, I congratulate you, and her, sincerely.

Colo. Shreve's Bond being in your possession, it is not in my power to endorse the above payment of \$1961.30 thereon: but Colo. Ritchie's, which I herewith enclose for the purpose of depositing the same in the Bank of Pennsylvania, (that the Instalments may be collected agreeably to the tenor thereof) has the payment which was made inserted on the back. By placing both Bonds in that Bank, and transmitting me its statement, you will add to the obligations you have already conferred on me in this business. Having made an important contract (if the person with whom it is made can fulfil his part) for all the lands I hold On the Great Kanhawa; which are more than half I possess on the Western Waters; I have become less inclined than before, to lay the residue off into lots for the purpose of retailing them; conceiving, however advantageous it might prove in the end, my immediate purposes would not be answered thereby: while expence, trouble, and probable imposition unless a person of known integrity as well as activity could be engaged

as an Agent, would be the inevitable result.

Could I dispose of the three tracts which I hold on the River Ohio (between the mouths of the little and Great Kanhawa, on the terms my lands on the latter are Let. and my other lands in the Northwestern territory, composed, on each side of the River, of *three* tracts, containing aggregately 9,157 Acres on the Ohio (exclusive of what is called the round bottom, of 587 acres) and 3,051 acres on the little Miami, not more than ten or a dozen miles from Cincinnati. I say, if I could get these lands off my hands on similar terms with those of the Kanhawa, my views would be completely answered. These, I shall take the liberty of mentioning to you (as it would seem you are frequently troubled with enquiries relative to my Western Lands) although I do not expect a like offer will be suggested to you in my behalf.

The four tracts of Land which I held on the Great Kanhawa, amount to 23,216 Acres: these I have leased for 30 years, at the expiration of which, by doubling the Rents, thence forward, they are engaged for 99 years more; for the first yr. (1798) the Rent is to be \$5,000; for the 2d. \$8,000 and thence to the completion of the 30 years, the Rent is to be equal to the interest of eight dollars an Acre, upon the aggregate quantity of 23,216 Acres; with the priviledge at the end of Six years from the commencement of the Lease (the 1st of the present month) to purchase the fee simple at the price of two hundred thousand dollars; paid *in* four years, \$50,000 annually.

The Rents for the first six years are secured (besides the usual mode of Distress and recovery) by a Deed of trust, for a considerable landed property; to be sold for ready money if I should be inclined to resort to it for payment thereof; and the writings are so well drawn, I believe, as to save me against every contingent that can happen, except tying my hands against any other disposition of the lands untill the inability of the Lessee to perform the Covenants of the Lease, are clearly ascertained.

Library of Congress

The person with whom this agreement is entered into, lives in the county adjoining the Land, is perfectly well acquainted with all the land; and seems to be morally certain of stocking it with tenants (which he is authorised to do) immediately. That he is a Speculator; I need not add; but he must be a fool as well as a Speculator, if he does not see his way tolerably clear to fulfil the bargain on his part. His mind (he acknowledges) is made up for loss in the outset, but he looks forward to ample compensation in the result. His grand object is apparent to me, without any confession thereof on his part; Knowing the quality, situation, and value of the Land; he wanted, but for lack of means, was unable to become, at this time, the purchaser in fee; and therefore he agreed to pay a Rent equivalent to the interest of what would have been the purchase money, had he taken the whole quantity, viz, eight dollars pt. acre. His interest (and all his exertions now) coincide with mine to plant the land with settlers; which, admitting he should be unable to comply with the contract in all its parts, will render the property more valuable on account of the improvements,

to me.

I should not, my good Sir, have given you the trouble of all this detail respecting my concerns, at a time when I know your head and hands must be engaged in National matters of the utmost importance to our country, but from a consideration, if further enquiries should be made of you, of my intentions respecting the lands On the Ohio, between the Kanhawas, and of those No. Wt. of that River, that you may be enabled to say what I have done and am willing to do. For the round bottom alone an offer of eight dollars an Acre has been refused already. The quantity in this Survey, is less than in either of the others on that River, or on the Miami; but whether the quality of it is much, if any better, I am not sufficiently acquainted with them to pronounce.

If Mrs. Ross is with you in Philadelphia, I pray you to present me to her in respectful terms. And at all times be assured of the sincere esteem, and affectionate regard, etc.

***To HENRY LEE**

Mount Vernon, January 25, 1798.

Dear Sir: The period for payment of the second Instalment of your Bond is past, and the first Instalment is only partially complied with. Mr. Simms note, endorsed by you for \$1000, is protested at the Bank, where it was deposited for collection.

It, Cannot be more unpleasant for you

to hear, than for me to remind you of these things, but it is necessary for me to do so, and to express a hope that some vigorous measures are in train to fulfil your engagement with me. My own want requires it. For depending upon this fund, and induced thereto by my manager's statement of the utility of the measure, I have encountered a considerable expence in building a large Distillery (at my Mill) providing Stills, &ca. &ca.; and shall be unable to carry it on without cash to purchase the Grain that is requisite for this purpose. Let me entreat you to believe, that at the time I entered into the contract with you for the property I held in the Dismal Swamp, I had no conception of such disappointments, and that it is a mode of dealing to which I am not accustomed.

If the purchase money for it, is to be paid in small driblets, instead of annual Instalments, the value of it will, in a manner, be lost to me: Yet as I must purchase Corn and Rye, or let my Distillery (now it is erected) stand idle, I will receive of either, and allow the *Cash* price for what you will deliver my landing, Or, if you think this is too indefinite, I will give the price pr. Barrel or Bushel that Mr. Burwell Bassett purchases for me at, being authorised to send me up a Vessel load. In short I am disposed to accomodate you in any reasonable manner I can, although nothing would answer my purposes like money, as the business would then be wholly in my own hands, and I should know my *ground* .

If you are able, and are inclined to furnish me with Corn, or Rye, or both, say

Library of Congress

with *precision* what quantity, and certainty by what time. And I pray you not to deceive me by erroneous calculations, either as to the quantity or time of delivery. If you have neither for sale, I beg to be informed thereof as soon as possible, as I must be supplied in some manner or another. With great regard etc.

***To ROBERT LEWIS**

Mount Vernon, January 26, 1798.

Dear Sir: The return of your brother Howel, affords me a direct and safe opportunity of enquiring whether any, and if any, what money you have of mine in your hands? What are your prospects of collecting the past years Rents, *seasonably*, and when I may look for the receipt of them?

I have been induced, by the experience and advice of my Manager, Mr. Anderson, to erect a large Distillery at my Mill; and have supplied it with five Stills, Boilers &ca. which, with the (Stone) House, has cost me a considerable Sum already, but I find these expenditures are but a small part of the advances I must make before I shall receive any return for them, having all my Grain yet to buy to carry on the business. To accomplish this, all my resources are needed, and I beg you to exert yourself in the collection of my Rents, and that you would let me know, upon the best data you can form an opinion, what dependence I may place on you; not only

as to the amount of the sum, but also as to the period of its payment, that I may regulate matters accordingly.

As a Rental, according to former Instructions, should be annually exhibited, in order to show, not only what has been received, but the arrearages, if any at the sametime, in one view, that by a reference thereto I can always see the state and condition of each tenement. I must now add, as a further Instruction, that all casualties, such as the exchanging of Tenants, Increase, or decrease of Rents, etc. etc., may be specifically

Library of Congress

noted at the foot of the Rental; Which is considered always as a kind of Record of the Collectors proceedings. Columns in which, for the size of the tenements, Sums paid, and the arrearages due, you know are necessary.

Mrs. W. and Nelly Custis unites in best wishes with Your etc.

***To GEORGE THACHER⁸⁸**

Mount Vernon, January 27, 1798.

Sir: It is not long since the Papers herewith sent have been in my possession, altho' from the date they bear, one would be led to think otherwise.

If the statements are just, the case merits attention; and as Mr. Goodwin has mistaken the road by which the application (if redress can be afforded) is to be made, I have taken the liberty of transmitting them to you, on the supposition that he is a resident in the District you represent. I wish you an agreeable and harmonious Session, and am etc.

88. Member of Congress from Massachusetts.

***To WINTHROP SARGENT⁸⁶**

Mount Vernon, January 27, 1798.

Dear Sir: A few days since a Mr. Josh. Massey said to be a Surveyor of the North Western Territory passed through Alexandria on his way to Philadelphia, and there said to a Gentleman, without assigning reasons or having them asked, that I should lose my lands on the little Miami in that Country.

Never having heard of any claim to it, or being able to conjecture on what ground it can be jeopardised, I take the liberty of troubling you with this address: requesting the favour

Library of Congress

of you as the land lyes in the vicinity of Cincinnati, to make enquiry into the matter and to inform me of the result.

I hold 3,051 acres in three separate tracts, under a Military claim. the first containing 839 Acres was surveyed the 28th of Decr 1787. and lies within a mile of the River Ohio. the second is about seven miles up the little Miami and contains by the Survey thereof, made the 26th of May 1788 Nine hundred and 77 Acres, and the third about three miles higher up the Miami was Surveyed the day following i e. the 27th of May for 1235 Acres: And letters Patent were granted by the Commonwealth of Virginia under the hand and Seal of the then Governor, Beverly Randolph for the same bearing date all the first day of Decr. 1780. The number of the Warrants and on what occasion granted was recited in the Deeds: but I presume for

86. Secretary of the Northwest Territory.

the mere purpose of an enquiry it is unnecessary to be more particular at present, until I learn upon what ground my right is assailed, or at what tribunal I am to defend that Right; for until the Report (as coming from Massey) was made to me, I had no suspicion of being disturbed in the property.

Under persuasion that you will oblige me in this request, I shall make no apology for giving you the trouble to make the enquiry. but will pray for your Answer as soon as convenient. With great esteem etc.⁸⁷

***To RUFUS PUTNAM**

Mount Vernon, January 28, 1798.

Dear Sir: The letter, of which the enclosed is a copy, I had written to Colo. Sargant; but it having occurred to me since, that if my right to the Lands therein mentioned should be called in question, or any ungenerous advantage attempted to be taken from any defect,

Library of Congress

or informality in my title, of which, and the ground on which it is questioned I am entirely in the dark, that it must, in some shape or another come before you as Surveyor General of that Territory. Should this be the case, I not only crave the same favour of you that I have done of Colo. Sargent but pray that any interference with my right may be arrested until matters can be fully explained.

For the Right, purchased many years ago; for looking out the Land and making the locations; and for Surveying, and other incidental expences, I have

87. The press copy is badly faded and the text of this letter is checked by the "Letter Book" copy.

already paid *fully* what was supposed to be the value of the land at the time I obtained it. It would be not a little hard, not to say unjust, to have it taken from me now, even admitting (which I do not, because I am not knowing to it) that there may have been some faupas in the proceedings on my behalf.

If you have heard, or should come to the knowledge of this attempt you would oblige me much by giving me information thereof, and on what plea I am to be disturbed in property of which I have possessed so many years. With very great esteem, etc.⁸⁹

***To THE SECRETARY OF WAR**

Mount Vernon, January 28, 1798.

Dear Sir: Knowing that the War Office has an Agency in the Western Lands, I take the liberty of putting the enclosed letters to General Putnam and Colo. Sargent under cover to you, open. By doing so, it supercedes the necessity of a repetition of what is therein mentioned. Another reason for giving you this trouble, is, that if Mr. Massey is a Surveyor in the Northwestern Territory, it is highly probable that his business in Philadelphia is with your Office. In which case, let me pray you to obtain what information he can give,

Library of Congress

respecting the claim upon my land, and transmit the same to me; and to request, after sealing my letters to the Gentlemen above mentioned, that you would be so kind as to

89. The original of this letter is in Marietta College, Ohio.

put them into the safest channel of conveyance, that is afforded from Philadelphia.

What means this calm, and apparent harmony in the Representative body?⁹⁰ Is it because no collusive subject has come on? or does it proceed from a change of sentiment in the opposition members? Are there no accounts yet *from* our Envoys? If not, to what is their silence attributed, when the News Papers are filled with accounts *of* them, as late as the middle of November from Paris; where they must have been at least six weeks?

What, as far as it can be guessed at, is the public sentiment relative to Monroe's voluminous work? which I have not yet seen, but have sent for it. And what of Fauchet's?⁹¹ Another elaborate work, I presume, will appear soon, from the late Commissioner of the Revenue;⁹² the cause of whose dismissal has never (that I have seen) been hinted in the Gazettes.⁹³

What has been, or is it supposed will be done by the house of Representatives in consequence of the extraordinary application which was made to them on that occasion, by the Ex-Commissioners.⁹⁴

I have exhibited a long string of questions, but if you have not leisure, or if any of them are embarrassing, I require no answer to them. Mrs. Washington and Nelly Custis unite with me, in every good wish for Mrs. McHenry, yourself and family, and I am always, and Affectionately Yours.

90. McHenry replied (February 1): "The calm in the house of Representatives has been lately interrupted by an attempt to trench upon the power of the President relative to foreign intercourse and more recently by one member spitting in the face of another.

Library of Congress

Whether this affair has more meaning than appears I cannot say but the spitter [Matthew] Leon [Lyon, of Vermont] is a great beast.”

91. McHenry stated, in his letter of February 1: “Monroe's memoir has been little read and has made no converts to his party. He has I think sunk in the public opinion. Fauchet's publication has done no harm, and has been as little successful as Monroes.” McHenry's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

92. Tench Coxe.

93. President Adams had removed him from office in December, 1797.

94. To France. McHenry's letter (February 1) stated: “Not one word direct from our commissioners.”

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, January 29, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 16th. has been received, and the Music Strings⁹⁵ came safe.

If you conceive any advantage will result from a delay in the sale of the old Coach, until the Spring, it will be quite agreeable to me that it should be postponed. To avoid the accumulating expence of Ho. room, and the injury such articles sustain by lying, and often by neglect and tossing about was my inducement to the disposal of it *now* . But it rests with *you* to chuse the time.

If the Plateaux are not sold, nor a probability of getting nearly what they cost, say currency for Sterling, I request that they may be carefully packed up and sent to me, together with the two smallest of the large groups of Porcelain, and the twelve single images (Arts and Sciences) with which my Table, on Public days, was ornamented. The large group (Apollo instructing the Shepherds) and the two Vases, may be sold for what ever they will fetch.

Library of Congress

Great care, by a skilful hand, must be used in packing the Porcelain, or all the delicate and finer parts will be broken off.

I have not yet heard (although it may have happened) of Ellwoods arrival at Alexandria. As Dobson's bill is not exhibited, I am unapprized of what is charged in it, or of what is coming from him. My wish was, and still is, to have the second copy of all the Volumes (as far as published, intended for my own use) of the Encyclopedia, to be neatly bound and sent to me, the last volume excepted, which he will retain to bind the remainder by

95. For Nelly Custis's harpsichord.

(if more are yet to come) that all may be alike. If this is not the case, pray let it be so as soon as possible, and he shall receive the cost without delay.

I must again trouble you in forwarding the enclosed (after sealing) to Mr. Kitt, and will say now what I did not do on this subject in my former letter, and that is, that if you have any dereliction to the business, be frank in declarg. it.

Inclosed is a letter, and receipt of Doctr. Barton's⁹⁶ for Sixty dollars which I pray you to receive, *if you can* , and place to my credit, but I inform you before hand, that you will never get a copper of it if it depends upon *him alone* . You will perceive by the letter, that the money borrowed, was, *punctually* , to be returned in a month. After waiting near, or quite a year, he was applied to, and then, I was, *assuredly* , to have it in two or three days; after as many months waking, without hearing a tittle from him applications were again made and the same answers have been received and so it went on until the Scenes of my Public life were closed and he was informed that I was desirous of adjusting all my pecuniary matters in Philadelphia before I left it when the most solemn assurance (without any intention I am persuaded to fulfil it) were given that the money should be instantly paid.

Library of Congress

It is necessary for me to observe here that Doctr. Barton is an entire stranger to me. Never, to my knowledge, or recollection, did I ever exchange a word with him in my life, nor should I know if I was to see him. I did by him (supposing from his connections that he was a man of honour) as I had done by many others, although I found it not a little difficult to

96. Dr. Benjamin Smith Barton. He was professor of natural history and botany, University of Pennsylvania.

make *all my receipts* in addition to my compensation, keep pace with my expenditures, that is, to advance a little money (not on Usury) for immediate purposes.

It is not my wish (nor will I) for so trifling a sum, have my name called in a Court of Justice; but (and as his promises alone you may be assured will deceive you) I would suggest the expediency of your obtaining his note, with security, for payment of the nett sum of Sixty dollars, (and I want no more lest it should be conceived that interested motives induced the loan) and then, at the expiration of whatever credit is given, call upon that Security if the money is not punctually paid by Barton. This, if the latter has credit to obtain the former he cannot object to. With esteem etc.

PS. If you could send me samples of some of the best German Oznabrgs. with the prices marked thereon, by the Ell, it would enable me to decide, whether to purchase in Philadelphia or Alexandria. I may, probably, require a thousand Ells.

In some of the late Philadelphia Gazettes I have seen Advertised a number of Passengers from Hamburgh, who are to make their own contracts. Among these it is said their are Clerks in different languages. If one could be had who is competent in English; who is master of a fair hand in English character; and who has testimonials as to his sobriety, morals and general good character, such in short as would satisfy you, were you in want of such

Library of Congress

a Person, I should be glad to contract with him on as long terms as could be obtained, having a great deal of copying to do. And if a complete Country blacksmith, One who knows how to make Ploughs, and all other impliments for a farm would be acceptable also.

***To BUSHROD WASHINGTON**

Mount Vernon, January 30, 1798.

My dear Bushrod: I had heard with much concern, before your letter of the 21st instant was received, of your illness; and congratulate you on your recovery. Be careful in guarding against a relapse, by taking cold.

I hope my letter of the 19th of this month got safe to your hands (by the Post); contained therein, were \$120 to enable you to do the needful relative to the taxes of my Western Lands; accompanied by some statements which might assist in the investigation of that business.

As Genl. Lees Deed to me was not recorded in the time prescribed by Law; what, if it is thereby rendered invalid, is necessary to be done to Secure my right to the Land therein conveyed?

The family here, are all well, and unite in every good wish for your perfect recovery and in best regards for Mrs. Washington. With Your Affecte. Uncle.

***To THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, February 6, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letters of the 20th and 27th. Ult. have been duly received; and the Pamphlets, with Colo. Monroe's *View*, came safe.

Library of Congress

If no direct opportunity to Alexandria should present itself soon, by which the works of Mr. Nancrede could be sent with convenience and without liability to damage, I would thank you for putting them (carefully wrapped up) into the hands of Colo. Biddle, who is the Agent employed by me for transacting the small matters I have to do in Philadelphia; and who, generally, sends such things as I require, by the Packets to Alexandria.

I am sensible of the honor done me by Mr. Nancrede⁹⁷ in the dedication of this work to me, and for his politeness in sending it; and shall, as soon as I know on what terms the *Studies of Nature* are offered, make him my acknowledgement accordingly.

I have not had leisure, yet, to look into Monroe's *View*, nor to read more than the first numbers of *Scipio* although I have them to the 15th. inclusive. Postponing the latter until I had obtained the former.

Notwithstanding there existed no doubt in my mind that the charge exhibited against you in the *Aurora* was a malignant falsehood yet, satisfied as I am of the *motive*, and the *end* intended to be answered *by the publication*, I have read with much gratification your explicit disavowal of its application. But the more the views of those who are opposed to the measures of

97. Paul Joseph Guérard de Nancrede, who published, in Boston in 1792, *L'Abeille François*.

our Government are developed, the less surprised I am at the attempt and the means, cowardly, illiberal and assassin like, which are used to subvert it; and to destroy all confidence in those who are entrusted with the Administration thereof. Among these, is to be classed an assertion, in the Pamphlet written by Mr. Fauchet in these words "It is the general opinion that Mr. Talon came to Philadelphia on a confidential mission from the Pretender" to Genl. Washington. "He was admitted to a very particular audience with the President before the arrival of Mr. Genet at Philadelphia." What the general *opinion*

Library of Congress

of the French party might have been is not for me to say, but I pronounce the latter part of the quotation to be an impudent, a wicked, and groundless assertion; and accordingly authorise any and every person who chuses to be at the trouble of doing it, to contradict it in the most unqualified terms. With Mr. Talon I had no acquaintance. If he ever was in my company it must have been in the drawing room (or at what was called the Levies) on company days. Whether I ever exchanged a word with him during the time of his stay in this Country, is more than my memory at this time, is able to decide. If his arrival in it was posterior to the proscription, or cloud which hovered of [*sic*] such characters, the probability is that he never did; be this however as it may; I will pledge myself that, I never, directly nor indirectly ever exchanged a word with him out of the public rooms, on public days, and on common place subjects. And if it could be adjudged expedient by you, and those with whom I usually conversed

on subjects of this sort I would announce as much in the Gazettes; when it might not be amiss perhaps to let my *whole* letter to Mr. Gouver. Morris, and his to me, to which it was an answer, appear also in order to do away the effect of another charge which extracts drawn from the former, was intended to make on the public mind, namely, a dereliction to France and the contrary to Great Britain. To produce a justification of one's conduct in matters of this sort wou'd be unpleasant, if it was unconnected with public concerns, I should treat the assaults to injure me with the contempt they deserve; but when it [illegible] becomes a matter of more magnitude and merits [illegible].

***To BUSHROD WASHINGTON**

Mount Vernon, February 7, 1798.

My dear Bushrod: Your letter of the 1st instant came to hand by Saturdays Post, with the Auditors Receipts. If no bad consequences flow from the delay, in that Office, it is immaterial when I obtain the result of his investigation of the State of my taxes, on the Western Waters; but to prevent it, let me request you, to keep his enquires alive. The tract

Library of Congress

of 587 Acres lyes, I presume, in the County of Harrison; or if divided, in the part taken therefrom, below, on the River Ohio, lying about 15 miles below Wheeling. The other tract, on the Ohio, is situated 3 or 4 Miles below the Mo. of little Kanhawa; and if not *in* the County bearing that name, must be in the one next above it. And the other missing tract, assuredly lyes in what is *now* called Kanhawa.

Yesterday, the enclosed came to my hand, and is forwarded without delay. I am exceedingly glad to hear that you are quite well. Accept, and present, our Affectionate regards etc.

***To THE SECRETARY OF WAR**

Mount Vernon, February 7, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your two letters, both dated the 1st. instant, came to hand yesterday *only* . I thank you for giving me the perusal of their enclosures; and as I am upon the point of setting out to a meeting of the Stock holders of the Potomack Navigation, and may be from home two or three days, I return them without delay.

I had, it is true, entirely forgot my old Coach until reminded thereof by Mr. Small; upon which, I wrote to Colo. Biddle (who transacts all matters of that sort for me in Philadelphia) to sell it for whatever it would fetch, and took it for granted that all expences (as he had money of mine in his hands) had been paid. Let me entreat you, therefore, to direct Mr. Small to that source for payment.

As the Gout and Rheumatism are

said to be cousin germans, it is no matter on which Acct. (I hope I may) congratulate you on a recovery from. Complimts. &ca. and I am always etc.

***To BURWELL BASSETT**

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, February 10, 1798.

Dear Sir: I am glad to find by your favour of the 1st. instant, from Eltham, that you had postponed entering into any contracts for Corn until you should hear from me, relatively to the advanced price of that article *with you* .

Since Corn has arisen to 15/. with you, I find I can purchase, and supply my Distillery with all it requires, on better terms here than to fetch it from below. When the freight, Insurance or risk are added to 15/. the cost of that article on York river, it will amount to 17/6 *at least* ; when it is to be bought in Alexandria at 16, or 16/6 *at most* .

Under these circumstances I pray you to desist from buying, and to accept my thanks for the trouble I have already given you in this business. The family here are all well, and unite with best regards for you etc.

***To ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD**

Mount Vernon, February 11, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letters of the 14th Ult. and 6th. instr. have been duly received. The receipt of the first, would have met with an earlier acknowledgment, had I not waited for the coming of the latter, agreeably to your assurances of forwarding one, so soon as the documents could be obtained from the Records in Richmond.

The description which you have been at the trouble to give me in your former letters, of my lands on Rough Creek; the view of the country *generally* , contained in that of the 14th. Ult.; and the particular description of the Waters of Rough Creek and Green River; together with the bounteous provisions made by *Providence* to accommodate the Inhabitants of it, is clear, precise, and extremely satisfactory; and I fell myself much gratified, and obliged by the recital of them.

Library of Congress

All the Papers transmitted in your letter of the 14th of January, are herewith returned, as they may be of use to you in the prosecution of the business, which you have kindly undertaken in my behalf, and can be of none to me, in the present stage of the business; nor ever, perhaps, if matters are amicably settled, and I should not become the purchaser of the tract formerly Wodrows.

From your account of the prices of Land on rough Creek, I should suppose that twenty shillings an Acre for Hite's 300 Acre tract (formerly Wodrows) would be considered a high price, especially as the whole, in a manner, is periodically flooded; to this extent I would go; having a little previous notice after the purchase is made to provide for the paymt.

If the Land cannot be obtained at this price, Mr. Short might be requested *as from yourself* to ascertain the lowest sum Mr. Hite would take, and await the result of an answer, from me. Mr. Short is, I have no doubt, a Gentleman of character; but it will not escape you, that in treating with a neighbour, perhaps an intimate friend, he wd. feel no disposition to bring Mr. Hite to his lowest price, or ultimatum. But if he should make the purchase, one thing will be indispensably necessary, and that is, to see that Mr. Hite's title is clearly derived; for it does not appear from the Papers you sent me (which are returned) by what transfer, or process, Mr. Isaac Hite became the Grantee. The Record says, that Andrew Wodrow assigned the Survey of 300 acres to Isaac Hite, Abraham Hire junr., and Joseph Hite. and by another endorsement Andrew Hynes is introduced, as standing between the Hite's and the Grantee.

With respect to the other contemplated addition to my land on Rough Creek, I would not wish to proceed further, in the first instance, than to an *enquiry* whether *all* the Lands, to be included by a straight line, to be run from the upper corner of my 2000 Acre tract, at G in the connected plat, I sent you, to the lower corner on the Creek, of the 3000 acre tract, at D, could be had? At what price? and on what credit? If Mr. Field, at your request,

Library of Congress

would be so obliging as to ascertain these points, it would be rendering me an acceptable service; and my ulterior measures would be regulated thereby. As it is not

an unusual thing for People to have their expectations raised, and to raise their prices accordingly, upon enquiry of this sort, it may not be amiss for him to understand, that my *sole* object is to *shape* my land, and to include the waters, having *very little* inclination to increase the quantity, and none for the purposes of speculation. If, therefore, the Proprietors of the lands, which would be included by such a line as is described above, should be induced to advance their price in consequence of these enquiries, they will deceive themselves, at the sametime that they defeat my object.

I pray you to keep an A/c of the cost, of obtaining copies of any Records in behalf, and to let me know the amount; as also of any other expences which may be incurred in the transaction of this business, and they shall be paid on demand, with thanks, and with pleasure: for though I give you trouble in it, I do not mean to load you with expence. I wish also to be informed whether the Postmaster in Fredericksburgh charges postage on my letters to you, or not, when they are Franked with my name.

We are all tolerably well, and unite with best regards to you, Mrs. Spotswood and the rest of the family. With very great Esteem etc.

***To SALLY BALL HAYNIE**

Mount Vernon, February 11, 1798.

Miss Salley: I have received your letter of the 28th. of last month, and without enquiry at this time why you left Mr. Lewis's family or how you employ your time, I have requested him to furnish you with ten pounds to supply you with such necessaries as you may be in immediate want.

Library of Congress

But as you have no fortune to support you, Industry, œconomy, and a virtuous conduct are your surest resort, and best dependance. In every station of life, these are commendable. In the one in which it has pleased Providence to place you, it is indispensably necessary that they should mark all your footsteps. It is no disparagement to the first lady in the Land to be constantly employed, at some work or another; to you, it would prove, in addition to a chaste and unsullied reputation the surest means of attracting the notice of some man with whom your future fortune will be united in a Matrimonial bond and without which it would be in vain to expect a person of worth. I wish you well and am Your friend.

***To ROBERT LEWIS**

Mount Vernon, February 11, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 31st Ult^o. came safe to hand, and the Deed therein enclosed, shall be executed in the manner, and in time, to obtain a certi

ficate from the Clerk of this County at the Court next to be held for it, on the 19th. instant, and transmitted to you.

Enclosed is a letter for Sally Haynie, left open for your perusal before it is forwarded to her; with the contents of which, respecting the payment of ten pounds, I request you to comply; and charge the same to the A/c of your collection of my Rents.

With regard to my Land above Bath, I am really at a loss what direction to give concerning it. To have the valuable Walnut trees, with which it abounds, taken off, by a parcel of lawless intruders, is extremely disagreeable (if they can not be punished) on the one hand, and for the sake of obtaining a better Rent, to engage to take them off myself, within a given period, and that perhaps a short one, would be attended with great inconvenience, perhaps expence and loss, on the other. For unless I could get them to *this place* the cost of felling, preparing them for transportation, and attending them down the River would be a dead charge, and without the latter was done, that is to attend the logs down, I should not

Library of Congress

get one of them; of course all that preceeded would be lost. I see but two modes by which I can be benefitted by these Logs; one to let some person occupy the land without paying Rent, for the sole consideration of taking care of them. The other, if a good rent could be obtained, to oblige the Tenant to deliver them *to me* , noting the quantity of the trees, at a certain price, to be allowed out of the Rent. A third method indeed occurs, but it is one by which I should, apparently, get little for them, namely, to sell them on the spot: and yet, ultimately, if they would sell *there* for near their value, it might be the most productive mode of the three.

Under this dilemma, make the best investigation of the subject you can, and act as shall seem most conducive to my interest. I am not inclined to give a lease for *more than Seven years* , and if the tenant is permitted to kill the Walnuts by girdling the trees, I do not believe that the Crops would sustain much injury by their standing. They would season in this manner, and a few years hence, when the Navigation of the River is in a more improved state might be brought down with more ease and safety. Perhaps, upon the whole, this may be found the most eligible Plan.

We are all tolerably well at this time and unite in offering our best wishes for you, Mrs. Lewis and the family. With sincere friendship, and Affectionate regard, etc.

***To JAMES ROSS**

Mount Vernon, February 12, 1798.

Dear Sir: For the mere purpose of acknowledging the receipt of your favor of the 2d. instant,⁹⁸ covering a receipt from the Bank of Pennsylvania for the Bonds of Colonels Shreve and Ritchie, deposited therein for Collection, is this letter written.

I will add however, while the Pen is in my hand, that with you, I think it is vain to expect any change in the sentiments, or political conduct of those who are, in every form it can be

Library of Congress

tried, opposing the measures of the Government, and endeavouring to sap the foundation of the Constitution.

98. Ross had written: "The legislature is much divided, and the parties in it, as much embittered against each other, as it is possible to conceive. The more our danger encreases, the factious, discontented spirit seems to become bolder, and to assume a more desperate [*sic*] attitude. One party or the other must obtain a decisive Victory before the Machine of Government can move with efficacy. The sooner this is decided the better, At present the House of Represts. is engaged in a deep, learned discussion of a knotty question. Whether Spitting in the face of a Member while attending his duty in the house is an insult or not. Those who know the house best seem to think that the ruffian who was guilty of this rudeness, will be protected by his party." Ross's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

A little time now, must decide what their ulterior movements will be, as they have brought matters to a crisis. With very great esteem etc.

***To THOMAS PETER**

Mount Vernon, February 16, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 13th instant was received yesterday, Previous thereto, a young man of Hanover County, who writes a beautiful hand; said to be well acquainted with accounts; and can obtain good recommendations, has offered his services as a Clerk; but asking more than I am disposed to give, I had wrote him, that if he would fall to my mark, I would employ him in that line; and until I receive his answer, I am not enabled to say any thing *definitively* relatively to the Nephew of Mr. Davidson.

I may add however, that if my proposal is not acceded to (of which I shall be informed by the middle of next week) I would engage Mr. Davidson's Nephew as a Clerk, at the rate of \$100 pr. Ann: provided he will Indent himself to me for three years, or (being as you

Library of Congress

say about 18 until he is of age; and provided also he has had a classical education or is capable of writing gramatically, and has some knowledge of accts. and Book keeping or could soon acquire it; and above all is sober and discreet, and of a good disposition.

It does not appear from your

letter that Mr. Davidson has been apprised that, whoever comes to me as a Clerk, will not set at my Table. It is necessary that he should be previously informed of this, the one I have written to is acquainted therewith, and does not expect it. The person whosoever he may be, will eat as I do, but at a second table with the Housekeeper, who is a decent and respectable woman. He will have a bed room over the Office, where he will write (the one at present used by Mr. Anderson) and will be very comfortably fixed, having his washing, as well as bed and board found him. These things are mentioned before hand, that matters may be clearly understood.

If they are agreeable and Mr. Davidson or his Nephew will intimate as much, they shall hear further from me so soon as I receive the expected answer from Hanover; and if the Nephew possesses the qualifications I have enumerated, and will come bound, he will be accepted, if the other refuses my oiler. I wish to be informed in this matter without delay, and at the sametime to receive a specimen of the young man's writing. Mrs. Washington who is well unites with me in best wishes for yourself, Patcy and the Children, with etc.

***To JOHN FITZGERALD**

Mount Vernon, February 20, 1798.

Dear Sir: In answer to your letter of yesterday's date, I request you would inform Mr. Sim's that I cannot with my own consent, and consistent with my own engagements, grant the time he asks for payment of the money due me, and which ought to have been paid weeks ago.

Library of Congress

If my hold is not *weakened* by the Act, and he will give me unequivocal security (such I mean as *you* would be satisfied with) that the money with interest from the time it became due, and cost of protest &ca. at the Bank, shall be paid on, or before the first day of April next I will consent (although it may involve me in embarrassment) to wait until that then, for payment; beyond which I cannot extend it; and must request to be informed, and decidedly, whether he accedes to this, that my measures, if he does not, may be taken Accordingly. If he should to you as the mutual friend to both, I submit the Negotiation. The former note is yet at the Bank. Mr. Sim will not forget, I trust, that his *first* application was for a few days *only* ; and the forbearance has been upwards of six weeks. I stand, at this moment, engaged to pay for a quantity of Rye and Corn, and must buy more, or let my Distillery remain Idle, wch cannot, reasonably be expected. Yrs. etc.

***To ALEXANDER MARTIN⁹⁹**

Mount Vernon, February 22, 1798.

Sir: The last Post brought me your favour of the 4th instant, accompanied by a Dramatic piece of Poetry. For both I thank you.

The latter I have read with pleasure; highly applauding the motives wch gave birth to it: for lamentable, and much to be regretted indeed it is, that in a crisis like the present, when all hearts should be united and at their Post, ready to rejoice at the good, or repel the evil which await us, that nothing but internal dissensions and political hostilities are to be found in the Councils of our common Country.

Although no longer an Actor on this Theatre myself, I cannot but view these things with deep concern. I have the honor etc.

I do not know what Road you usually travel to and from the Seat of Government, but if it be by the way of Alexandria I should always be glad to see you at this place of my retreat.

Library of Congress

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, February 27, 1798.

Dear Sir: In the latter end of Jany. I acknowledged the receipt of your letter of the 16th. of that month; writing you fully relative to several matters;

99. Senator from North Carolina.

On February 22 Martha Washington wrote to Mrs. Robert Liston, wife of the British Minister. The draft of this, in the writing of Washington, is in the *Washington Papers*.

on some of which (one in particular respecting the price of the best German Oznabgs.) I was in hopes I should have received an immediate answer to. Not having heard of the miscarriage of any Mail, I am at a loss to what cause to ascribe your silence; and yet, none appearing so likely, as a mishap of the letter, I forward a duplicate of it.

Ellwood arrived about the date of my last, and the articles sent by him were delivered in good order. By the first Vessel bound to Alexandria, I pray you to send me the several Articles mentioned in the enclosed list, addressed to the care of Colo. George Gilpin of that place. I am etc.

Sundries, to be sent from Philadelphia by Colo. Clement Biddle, for, and on A/c of George Washington; and addressed to Colo. Geo: Gilpin in Alexandria.

A Small box, say 20 or 30 lbs. of the best Imperial, or Hyson Tea

Two Jars, or small boxes best Raisons

A barrel, or about 50 lbs. good Currants

50 lbs Almonds in the shell

Library of Congress

Half a bushl. or bushel of the Ground Pease, or Pindars as theyare called

A barrel, or smaller quantity of the best kind of Shell barkHiccorry Nuts or Kiska Toms as some call them.

***To WILLIAM AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON**

Mount Vernon, February 27, 1798.

My dear Sir: Mr. Rice called here in his way to Alexandria, and delivered me your letter of the 15th. instant.

Of the recent afflicting event,¹ which was related therein, we had received previous accounts; and on that as on former occasions of a similar nature, sympathised sincerely in your sorrows. But these are the decrees of an Allwise Providence, against whose dictates the skill, or foresight of man can be of no avail; it is incumbent upon him therefore, to submit with as little repining as the sensibility of his nature will admit. This will have its course, but may be greatly ameliorated by philosophical reflection and resignation. As you have three children left, I trust they will be spared to you, and sincerely hope that in them you will find consolation and comfort.

Had your intimation of Mr. Ashton's² wishes been announced to me about a fortnight ago, I would, gladly, have employed him in the character you have mentioned; provided his expectation of compensation had come within my means; which, in truth, are hardly able to support the heavy expences I am, in a manner, unavoidably run into, Finding it impracticable to use the exercise (on horseback) which my health, business and inclination requires, and, at the sametime to keep my Accounts, and perform all the writing which my late public occupations have been the means of involving me in, I resolved to employ a Clerk (if to be had on moderate wages) and accordingly, about

Library of Congress

1. Ford thinks this was the death of the second wife of William Augustine Washington, who was Mary, the daughter of Richard Henry Lee.

2. Burdett Ashton. He married Ann Washington, the sister of William Augustine.

twelve or fourteen days ago, engaged one who writes a very good hand, and said to understand Accounts and Book keeping, at \$150 a year. What would have been Mr. Ashton's expectations I know not; beyond this sum, or \$200 at most, I could not have gone: and if he would have been contented therewith, and the application had been made in time, I should have received him with pleasure, in preference to the person who is to come, and who I expect here about the middle of next month, if he fulfils his promise.

The reason which you assign for giving the rudiments of education to your sons at home is a weighty and conclusive one; but much will depend upon the qualifications, and fitness of the Preceptor you employ, to render it more or less beneficial. To a certain point, tuition under the eye of Parents, or Guardians of Youth, is much to be preferred; because, the presumption is, that the propensities and passions, will be watched with more solicitude and attention by them, than by their Tutors: but when the direction of these are unfolded, and can be counteracted by the discipline of Public Schools, and the precepts of the Professors. Especially too, when the judgment is beginning to form; when pride becomes a stimulus; and the knowledge of men, as well as of Books, are to be learnt; I should give the preference to a public Seminary.

I make use of no Barley in my Distillery (the operations of which are just commenced). Rye chiefly, and Indian Corn in a certain proportion,

compose the materials from which the Whiskey is made. The former I buy at 4/6 for the latter I have not given more than 17/6, and latterly 17/. delivered at the Distillery. It has sold in Alexandria (in small quantities from the Waggon) at 16/. and 16/6. pr Barrell. but at

Library of Congress

what it goes now I am unable to inform you. So large a quantity as you have for sale may command a good price.

Is there any person in your neighbourhood in the practice of selling staves, proper for flour barrels? If so, be so good as to inform me, and at what price they could be delivered at my landing (at the Mill). Any letters for me, put into a Post Office meets a safe and ready passage but how to insure mine to you, you can best tell, and I wish to be informed.

Did you ever receive a letter from me transmitting the request of Sir Isaac Heard of the Heraldry Office in England respecting the Genealogy of our family? and my own desires to be furnished with the Inscriptions on the Tombs of our Ancestors on [illegible] Bridges Creek? Among your father's Papers, I thought it was likely, you might obtain some information on this head. From the coming over of John and Lawrence Washington brothers in the year 1657 I have been able to trace the descendents of the former; being the one from whom our family came; those of Lawrence, from whom the Chotanckers proceeded, I have not been able to give any correct account; and that is the Branch to which Sir Isaac Heard's enquiries particularly point, being tolerably well informed of the descendants from John. The enquiry is, in my opinion, of very little moment,

but as Sir Isaac has interested himself in the matter and seems desirous of tracing the family from whence we are descended back, I wish to give him as correct information of it as I am able to procure.

I am very glad to hear that you enjoy tolerable good health at present, and that your children are perfectly well. It is unnecessary I hope to assure you, that at all times, when you can make it convenient, and the situation of your health will permit, that we shall be very happy to see you at this place. Where is Mrs. Washington of Bushfield? I hope She is well. I acknowledged the receipt of her latter to me by the Post, but whether it ever got to her hands or not, I am unable to say. Probably not, as you lye out of the Post Road, and they may not be in the habit of sending to the Post Offices. Poor lady! I fear she will soon

Library of Congress

have another afflictive trial of her resignation to the Divine Will, in the death of Mrs. Corbin Washington, who from the last accts. we have had of her, cannot remain long among us. This family unite in best wishes for you, and yours, And I am &c.

To ALEXANDER WHITE

Mount Vernon, March 1, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 20th. Ult. was received yesterday. For the information it has given I thank you; although it is not of the most pleasing sort, some parts of it indeed has surprised me not a little, but neither the surprise or the cause of it, shall be communicated to any other.

My sentiments relatively to the memorial you are already possessed of, and therefore I shall add nothing more on that Subject, than the expression of a fear, that the disgraceful topic which has so long occupied the time and oratory of the House of Representatives³ will contribute nothing to the favorable reception and issue of it.

If time should hang a little heavy on your hands, while the memorial is pending in Congress the appropriation of an hour or two of it *now and then* , not only to inform me of the progress of *that* business but as a calm observer (and in confidence if you choose it) to give me your opinion of matters as they pass before you in review; for misrepresentation and party feuds have arisen to such a height, as to distort truth and to become portentous of the most serious consequences. Where or when they will terminate, or whether they can end at any point short of confusion and anarchy is *now* in my opinion more problematical than ever.

I had until lately entertained a hope, that the continued depredations which are committed on our Commerce, the Pacific measures, which have invariably been pursued to obtain redress, and to convince the

Library of Congress

3. Representative Matthew Lyon's attack on Representative Roger Griswold.

French of our earnest wish to remain in Peace with them, and all the World; and the indignant treatment those efforts have met with, would have united all parties, and all descriptions of men (except those who wish to see the waters troubled) in a firm and temperate demand of Justice; or, in preparations for the worst: but the reverse seems more apparently than ever to be the case; and every thing that can be by the most unnatural construction is exhibited as a justification of the Conduct of France towards this Country, and in condemnation of the measures of the latter.

What seems to be the prevalent Opinion of Colo. Monroe's "View of the Conduct of the Executive of the United States?" I do not mean the Opinion of either party; but (if such are to be found) of the dispassionate, or at least of the moderate part of both. I will make no remarks on it myself inclining rather to hear the observation of others, which I would wish to hear with the most unreserved frankness. But I will not enlarge on this or any other subject at present but conclude with assuring you that with sentiments of very great esteem etc.⁴

4. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, March 3, 1798.

Dear Sir: Since writing to you on the 27th and 28th Ultio, your letter of the 22d. has been received. I should be glad to know, as soon as you are enabled to furnish me with the means of judging, whether it will be best to buy Oznabrigs, or Ticklenbergs in Alexandria, or to send to Philadelphia for them; and to know it, I shall await the result of your enquiries and information.

Library of Congress

I have already left it to your own judgment, to fix a period for selling the old Coach; and repeat it. You will have perceived however, that the expences thereon are accumulating; whilst, in all probability, the Carriage is growing worse and worse in its appearance. The A/c wch. has been exhibited for keeping it (if the charge is not unusual) must be paid; to me it appears very high.

I prefer having the Encyclopedia (second set) bound in gilt calf; and I hope it will be done neatly: and when put into your hands and the A/c rendered to me, the money shall be immediately paid. The sooner I could receive them, the more agreeable it would be to me.

I have already employed a young man to come to me as a Clerk: but a blacksmith, if one of good appearance and character could be had as a redemptioner, it would suit me well, provided he was well acquainted with the construction of farming implements, Shoeing horses, &ca. With esteem etc.

***To JOHN PARKER**

Mount Vernon, March 4, 1798.

Sir: Your favour of the 9th Ult came duly to hand, and would have received an earlier acknowledgment had not causes of one kind or another intervened.

Always desirous of promoting works which are calculated for the use and benefit of mankind, and believing that the one you have in contemplation if well compiled, will contribute to this end, I readily become a Subscriber to it.

For the flattering terms in which you have been pleased to introduce the subject to me, I pray you to accept the thanks of Sir, etc.

***To THE SECRETARY OF WAR**

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, March 4, 1798.

Dear Sir: Knowing nothing of Mr. John Parker (whose letter I enclose you); of his fitness for the work he contemplates; or the utility of it when done; except bringing all these matters into a connected view; which indeed might be useful. But knowing as I well do, that many men when they want money, and do not readily know how else to come at it, are too apt to set projects of this kind on foot, to obtain it; sometimes for the *mere* purpose of catching a penny, without meaning more than to get hold of the money; and oftentimes without abilities to execute their designs in useful undertakings, by which attempts more competent pens lye

unemployed. I say, viewing things in this light, and presuming you have a better knowledge of what is stated in his letter than I can pretend to, of his views, and of the propriety of encouraging the proposed undertaking, I have taken the liberty of putting along with his letter, my answer, to be forwarded to him, or not as your judgment and from existing circumstances, you shall deem best. With truth and sincerity etc. Are our Commrs.⁶ Guillotined? or what else is the occasion of their Silence?

***To GEORGE RICHARDS MINOT**

Mount Vernon, March 5, 1798.

Sir: Your favour of the 10th Ult. accompanying the first Vol: of the continuation of Massachusetts history, came to my hands yesterday, and I delay not a moment to acknowledge the receipt of it, and to thank you for this fresh instance of your politeness; and for the sentiments you have been pleased to express for me.

From the accuracy of your pen, and the purity with which your former productions have been given to the Public, I entertain no doubt of the correctness and valuableness of the present work. With esteem etc.

Library of Congress

6. To France.

***To FRANCIS DEAKINS**

Mount Vernon, March 5, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 24th Ult^o. from George Town, enclosing Mr. Veatch's⁷ letter to you, and account of Rents due to me; got safe to my hands.

It is not my wish, or request, that any of my tenants near Monocasy (who manifest a real disposition to discharge their Rents honestly) should be injured by distraining on their affects. All therefore that is incumbent on Mr. Veatch to do, in this case, is to keep an eye upon them, and not to suffer the means by which these Rents are to be discharged, to slip thro' his fingers; and to take care also, if they are not paid in the specific article stipulated, that is Tobacco, that he receives the value thereof in money at the price it actually sold, at the time it became due, and ought to have been paid. Of these matters you will please to inform Mr. Veatch, and with whatever else you and he may judge it expedient to do, in my behalf I shall be perfectly satisfied, and will abide the issue.

If Mr Lear has received the Bale. due from Mr. Jones,⁸ he has no doubt given me credit for it, and it will appear in his A/c when I come to settle it.

I can only repeat to you, my thanks for the trouble you have taken in these concerns of mine, and add to them, assurances of being Dear Sir etc.

PS. At the moment I was going to close this letter for the Post Office, I was informed and heard with sincere regret, the death of your worthy brother, Colo. William Deakins, for whom when alive I had a high esteem and regard. On this melancholy occasion I offer you my heartfelt condolance.

7. Hezekiah Veatch.

Library of Congress

8. John Jones, of Cecil County, Md.

***To BUSHROD WASHINGTON**

Mount Vernon, March 8, 1798.

My dear Bushrod: As some time has elapsed since I heard from you, and something remained to be done by the Auditor of which you were to give me the result I have been apprehensive of a return of your fever and wish to hear of a perfect recovery of yourself and Mrs. Washington who we are informed has also been sick.

In one of my last letters to you, was enclosed a certified copy of the publication of the Chancery decree in the London Gazette relative to Colvills Affairs. Did it get safe to your hands? and in that, or another letter I asked what steps I ought to take to legalize Genl. Lee's Conveyance of Land to me, as the proof thereof was not in time? and whether the Postmaster in Richmond charged you with the Postage of my letters? To none of these have you made any response.

But the motive which has induced me to write to you, at this moment, will be found in the enclosed correspondences and with the observation and enquiry which follow, will explain the object of giving you the trouble of reading them.

Mr. Nicholas (who is a conspicuous performer in this business) is a Gentleman with whom I have no *recollected* acquaintance, and the political conduct of all those of the name, whom I do know, adds nothing to my esteem of them. He seems very desirous of drawing me into a correspondence on Party subjects; which of all others, is not the most pleasant; and even civil answers upon this topic to one of whose character I know nothing, might be imprudent.

Enquiring, upon the receipt of the first letter from Mr. Nicholas, who he was, I was answered, I think by Doctr. Stuart, that he was Clerk of Albemarle Court; was a

Library of Congress

respectable man; well disposed to the Government; and the reputed Author of a number of pieces under the signature of Americanus. Since that, he has doubted whether it was the person he had in view, or not; this circumstance, and Mr. Nicholas in his last letter speaking of you as his intimate friend, has induced me to give you the reading of *all* the letters; and to rest it with you, from a view of the subject, and the knowledge you possess of the character of Mr. Nicholas, to forward, or return to me, the letter herewith enclosed, to its address. It is left open for your perusal. If it goes on, seal and put it under another cover, or not, as you please. The other Inclosures will be returned to me of course.

Our love to Mrs. Washington and with sincere friendship &c.

***To JAMES KEITH**

(Private)

Mount Vernon, March 13, 1798.

Dear Sir: A few days ago I received the enclosed letter and Papers from Mr. Lear, but before I execute the Deed to the President of the Potomack Company alone, I wish to be informed from you (as one of the Directors) whether this would be agreeable to the letter of the Resolutions, on which the measure is founded, and if not strictly so, whether the Act of the President and Directors in this case had not better be made to be so. I shall not enlarge; but submit the matter to your reflection

on the mode most secure, and satisfactory to those who place their Stock in this situation. I do not recollect precisely enough, the transactions on that occasion, to give a pointed opinion thereon; Nor do I know for the same reason what is to follow the Conveyance of the Stock to the President of the Company, intermediate between *that* Act, and the moneys getting into the hands of the Treasurer. This is a matter which claims the serious attention of All those to whom the business is entrusted, and in whom confidence is

Library of Congress

placed. A letter in answr. to this, with the Papers returned, lodged in the Post Office by thursday morning will come safe, and be in time. With great estm. etc.

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, March 19, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 11th instant has been received; and I shall depend upon receiving samples of the Oznabrigs and Ticklenbirgs, with the prices annexed, so soon as you are enabled to give them; as I can not much longer delay purchasing the quantity I want, and am now making partial purchases to supply immediate calls, and not on good terms.

By the first regular Packett from Philadelphia I shall expect to receive the Groceries, the Table Ornaments, and the Encyclopedia:: Let the latter be accompanied by Mr. Dobsons acct. of cost; and say what sum will be necessary, in addition to any balance which I may have in your hands, after paying for such articles as have been ordered and which I am about to request; and the money shall be immediately remitted.

In consequence of the opinion given by you of Mr. Savages¹⁵ Print¹⁶ (presuming it is his you allude to) I pray *you* to request *him* to chuse four for me; and have them put into handsome, but not costly, gilt frames, with glasses (supposing them to be of a size to admit glasses) and send three of them to me; the other, Mrs. Washington (I believe) is under promise of presenting to Mrs. Green (now Mrs. Miller).¹⁷ This is the additional expence alluded to in the last Paragraph; and which I request may be paid as soon as presented to you.

I am very sorry to hear of the Capture of the Ship New Jersey. Where, or how, or when, these violations will end, is not for me to say. With esteem etc.

15. Edward Savage.

Library of Congress

16. Probably the prints from Savage's first portrait of Washington, which was painted in 1789 for Harvard University.

17. Widow of Gen. Nathanael Greene, who married Phineas Miller.

***To ALEXANDER WHITE**

Mount Vernon, March 25, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your favors of the 10th and 14th Instant have been duly received, and for the information contained therein I feel grateful. Rarely going from home, I have nothing in the way of News to offer you in return.

It has always been my opinion, and so I have expressed it, that the Proprietors of the City of Washington (with some exceptions) are, by their jealousies, and the modes they pursue to promote their local interests, amongst its worst enemies. But if your present exertion to obtain a loan from Congress should succeed, of wch the prospect seems good, all doubts respecting the intentions of that Body, towards the permanent establishment of the Government, at that place, will be removed; Confidence will take place in every mind; and the Public buildings will be accompanied by private ones for the accommodation of its Members. My wishes, and my labours have always tended to the accomplishment of these points; the first is all I have left, to offer, and these shall be fervent. The principle which operated for fixing the sites for the two principal buildings, were well understood, and found necessary at the time to obtain the *primary* object; *i e* the ground, and means for either purpose: but it is always easy from an ignorant or partial view of a measure, to distort and place it in an unfavorable attitude. Nothing short of insanity can remove Congress from the Building intended for its sittings, to any other part of the City in the

present progress of the Work. Where, or how the houses for the President and other public officers may be fixed, is, to me, *as an individual* , a matter of Moon-shine; but the reverse of the Presidents reason for placing the latter near the Capitol, was my motive for fixing

Library of Congress

them by the former. The daily intercourse which the Secretaries of the Departments *must* have, with the President, would render a distant situation extremely inconvenient to them; and not much less so would one be close to the Capitol; for it was the universal complaint of them all that while the Legislature was in Session they could do little or no business; so much were they interrupted by the individual visits of Members (in office hours) and by calls for Papers. Many of them have declared to me that they have been obliged, often, to go home and deny themselves, in order to transact the current business.

No person will congratulate you more sincerely than I shall, on the final success of your mission, if it answers yr. expectations; nor is there any one, who reprobates more than I do improper interferences *of all sorts* . As your perseverance, however, is likely to be accepted, and as this will open a view which promises a pleasing prospect, I hope you will suffer no difficulties, or differences, to divert you from your course; and that you will not quit the business until you see the Legislature seated in the Capitol of the United States.

The last Message from the President to the Houses of Congress has brought matters to an Issue, and how it will...¹⁸ to repeat with names,...could be fixed...that some Members of Congress...been selected...correspondence, with the. Directory of France and among other matters...advising that; or be received under...continued...If that report be true“What...would be too great...beast...owe their greatness to their Country....

The conversation related in your last, will never be repeated by me nor any thing else which is related in confidence. With very great esteem etc.¹⁹

18. The press copy is badly mutilated. The words indicated by leaders [...] are illegible. The “Letter Book” copy in the *Washington Papers* ends with the word “Issue.”

19. From *District of Columbia Letters and Papers* in the Library of Congress.

***To THE SECRETARY OF WAR**

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, March 27, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your favour of — came safe, and in due time; for the information contained in it I thank you; your request was immediately complied with, as every one of a similar nature shall be.

A Report is circulated in Alexandria and its vicinity, transmitted, (it is said) in private letters from Philadelphia, that a correspondence has been discovered, or more properly, letters have been intercepted from some M—rs of C—g—ss to the D—ct—y of F—, of a treasonable nature. Containing, among other matters, advice not to receive our Envoys; on the contrary, to menace us with hostile appearances, and they might rely upon bringing the U. States to her feet. The name of one person has been mentioned to me.

Cruel must these reports be, if unfounded; and if well founded, what punishment can be too great for the Actors in so diabolical a Drama. The period is big with events, but what it will produce is beyond the reach of human ken. On this, as upon all other occasions, I hope the best. It has always been my belief that Providence has not led us so far in the path of Independence of one Nation, to throw us into the Arms of another. And that the machinations of those, who are attempting it, will sooner or later recoil upon their own heads. Heaven grant it may soon happen upon all those, whose conduct deserve it. With truth I am etc.

***To MILES SMITH**

Mount Vernon, March 27, 1798.

Sir: A few days ago I was favored with the receipt of a letter from William Strickland Esqr. of York in England; which, as it was introductory of you, to me, I presume it must have passed through your hands.

Library of Congress

It would have afforded me much pleasure if you had been the bearer of that letter; and if at any time, business or inclination should induce you to make a tour in this State (Virginia) I should be much gratified in seeing you at this retreat. and in conversing with you on the principles and practice of Husbandry, notwithstanding my thread is nearly spun, and my wish is to Lease out my Farms (containing from five hundred to 1200 Acres of Ploughable ground) before it is broken. I live within eight or nine miles (by land and water) of Alexandria. I am etc.

***To THOMAS MARSHALL**

Mount Vernon, March 30, 1798.

Dear Sir: General Spotswood, in my behalf, has requested Mr. Short to purchase a small piece of land (from a Mr. Hite) adjoining one of the tracts I hold on Rough Creek, in the State of Kentucky; and wch, it is said, would add much to the value of mine.

Should this purchase take place, and a good and sufficient conveyance thereof be made, and duly executed to your satisfaction, I hereby authorise you to draw upon me in payment thereof, for any sum, not exceeding

Three hundred pounds or One thousand Dollars, at Sixty days sight, and the Bill shall be punctually paid.

I have had no further draughts upon me for the non-resident tax upon the 5000 Acres of Land which I hold on the Rough Ck. of Green River, but shall be ready to pay at all times such Bills as may be presented for this purpose. With very great esteem etc.

***To ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD**

Mount Vernon, March 30, 1798.

Library of Congress

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 23d. instant only got to hand last night, and whether this reply to it may reach you in time, is questionable.

Your suggestion I have adopted; and you will perceive by the enclosed letter to Colo. Marshall, left open for your perusal, sealing, and forwarding, that I have authorised that Gentleman in case Mr. Short should make the purchase from Mr. Hite, to draw upon me at Sixty days sight for any sum not exceeding Three hundred pounds, upon due execution of conveyance of the same to me.

Mrs. Washington will have an opportunity this day of informing Mr. Lewis of the recovery of his daughters health, as she proposes to call there. This family are all well, and unite with best regards to you and yours, with Dear Sir etc.

***To HENRY HOLLINGSWORTH**

Mount Vernon, April 4, 1798.

Dr. Sir: Your favour of the 25th Ult. with a piece of cloth of your own Manufacture, were presented to me a day or two ago, by Mr. Law.

For your polite attention to and kind recollection of me in sending the latter, I pray you to accept my best thanks, and an assurance of my wearing it with pleasure. The cloth is of an exceeding good texture, and well dyed; and I am persuaded will wear well; and let me add that no one will wish you greater success in the prosecution of your plan than I shall; for it has always been my opinion that the United States will be independent in name *only* until essential Arts and Manufactures are so established in them, as to subserve our purposes in case of War, with any of those Nations on whom we rely for our supplies. With esteem etc.

***To WILLIAM AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON**

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, April 5, 1798.

My dear Sir: Your letter of the 23d. Ult. addressed to the care of Mr. Edmd. Lee has been received, and I feel obliged by your endeavours to discover the genealogical descent from Lawrence Washington, the young brother of our Ancestor John; and for your enquiries after flour barrel Staves. If any material information should be obtained relatively to the first matter, I shall be obliged by the communication thereof.

At a crisis like the present, and enveloped as our foreign relations seem to be in clouds and darkness, it is not easy to decide on what to ask, or what to take, for the produce of our fields. By the last Accts. from Paris, our Commissioners to that Republic had not been received, nor was it likely they would be; and appearances, as far as it is to be inferred from the Presidts. message to Congress on the 19th. Ult., indicated nothing good, and afford no hope of redress for the injuries we have received from violated Treaties, and the arbitrary and unjust measures of the French Directory. Under these circumstances, and the present uncertain state of our political concerns, it would be hazardous to offer you any advice with respect to the disposal of your Corn: but was I in your place, I should, I believe, be more inclined to take the best price I could obtain *now* than wait for a *better market sometime hence* ; and I should be more solicitous to secure the fulfilment of the contract than to enhance the price of the article if credit is given, and without giving it, the sale will be dull: such is the state of Mercantile transactions, occasioned by the outrageous spoliations it has sustained, and the consequent distresses of those who have suffered by them. Under this view of the subject, and upon these principles too, I have disposed of my flour: the only article I had for market.

In speaking of Corn, and knowing that you raise a quantity every year for sale, it has occurred to me to ask, if you would be inclined to contract for 500 barrels annually, for the term of five or Seven years, and at what price. My lands are not congenial with this Crop,

Library of Congress

and are much injured by the growth of it; having an under stratum of hard clay impervious to water, which penetrating that far and unable to descend lower, sweeps off the upper soil in the furrows, although the land is generally level, and runs it, in spite of all I can do to prevent it, into injurious and eye-sore gullies. Nothing but the indispensable use of this food for my negros (and indeed for Hogs) has restrained me from discontinuing the growth of it altogether, or in small well improved lots only, but the uncertainty of obtaining a given quantity, at stated periods of the year, and from a person on whose ability and punctuality I could confidently rely.

I am not insensible that the moment is unpropitious (after the unnatural high prices which grain of all kinds has borne, from the peculiar circumstances of the times) for the *purchaser* to fix a price that is to prevail for five or seven years; and I know of no mode, if to be ascertained at the time of delivery, or a designated period of the year by which the curr. price can be determined, that might not liable to objection, or subject to disputes.

Having, however, brought the matter fairly to your view, you may, after giving it a consideration, let me have your sentiments thereon. A contract with *you*, would put me upon a certainty of getting the Corn, and you upon a certainty of the money for it, on the terms to be stipulated in a written contract.

With best wishes for you and yours in which the family here unite I remain etc.⁴⁴

44. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, of New York City.

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, April 8, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 25th. Ulto is before me, but I have not yet heard of the arrival of Captn. Tice, at Alexandria.

Library of Congress

Not being able to wait any longer for Oznabrigs, I have made the purchase of what I stood in need of, in Alexandria, further enquiry therefore after this article and the price of it, may be discontinued by you, in Philadelphia, on my Account.

The Bills for the other articles, purchased by you, with the A/c currant, have been received. By the latter, a balance of \$138.38 appears against me; but as interest on my Certificates became due the first of this month, and you will have the Coach and other things to sell, belonging to me, I have not remitted it.

About the middle of August, the term for which my present Miller is engaged, will expire; and it is not probable it will be renewed, as he is not, in the first place, though a pretty good Miller, the most industrious man in the world; and in the 2d. place, requires an increase of Wages.

His present wages, and allowance of Provisions are. \$166 # pr. ann, the first: the 2d. ample, but specified. A Cow is allowed to afford Milk, and wood is furnished and laid at his door; the house is comfortably large, and a Garden adjoining to it. In short I do not see that any convenience is wanting that a person in that line, can reasonably require.

The Mr. Lewis's, formerly, have aided me in procuring Millers; perhaps they could recommend one now. Mr. Oliver Evans is much in that line, to him I have wrote, as he is acquainted with my Mill, having

fixed some of her Works, and understanding that he lives in Philada. I leave the letter open for your perusal before delivery, wishing you to converse with him as well as the Mr. Lewis's on the subject of it, and inform me of the result. My enquiries, as you will perceive, go no further at present than to discover a *fit* character, who would be willing to engage on the terms here mentioned, and could be hereby the middle of Augt. With esteem, etc.

[H.S.P.]

***To JAMES LLOYD⁵²**

Mount Vernon, April 15, 1798.

Sir: For your kindness in forwarding a copy of the dispatches from our Envoys in France to the Government here, I pray you to accept my best thanks.

What a scene of corruption and profligacy has these Communications disclosed in the Directors of a People with whom the United States have endeavoured to Treat upon fair, just and honorable ground!

If they should be attended with the effect of "Speedily uniting our fellow-Citizens in a firm determination to support our Government, and preserve our Independence" as you seem to expect, it wd. indeed be cause for much congratulation and no one would rejoice more at such an event than I should—But—I wish it may be so. With esteem etc.

52. Senator from Maryland.

***To FERDINAND FEVOT**

Mount Vernon, April 15, 1798.

Sir: The papers which you were pleased to transmit to me from Baltimore are, agreeably to your request, returned.

Not perceiving what has been your object in addressing such sentiments as your letter of the 4th instant contain, and not being conscious of having merited the reprehension you have judged it expedient to inflict on me, I shall not give you the trouble of reading an answer in detail.⁵³

I cannot forbear observing however, that as it is not usual with me to treat any Gentleman with incivility, or even with indifference (especially under my own roof) I am unable to

Library of Congress

recollect any part of my behaviour which could give rise to such mis-conceptions of my motives.

As to the deceptions which may have been occasioned by the quotation in your letter, I shall only remark that I had no agency in the fabrication of it, or of anything similar thereto; that it is to be regretted, that we should have Land-jobbers and other Speculators among us, who, to promote their interested views will publish such accounts, and that foreigners should be imposed upon by them. I am &c.

53. Fevot signed himself as "Lawyer at the Sovereign Council of Berne." His grievance was that he had come to America as a political refugee, because of a book titled "Answer to all the questions that might be asked relating to the United States of America," which assured travelers that "The most generous hospitality is shewn to Strangers," and had encountered very different treatment. He complained, too, of Washington's coolness toward him at Mount Vernon. Fevot's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

***TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, April 16, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your obliging favour of the 11th. instant, enclosing copies of the Instructions to, and Dispatches from the Envoys of the United States at Paris, was received with thankfulness, by the last Post.

One would think that the measure of infamy was filled, and the profligacy of, and corruption in the system pursued by the French Directory, required no further disclosure of the principles by which it is actuated than what is contained in the above Dispatches, to open the eyes of the blindest; and yet, I am persuaded, that those communications will produce no change in the *leaders* of the opposition; unless there should appear, manifest desertion of their followers. There is a sufficient evidence already, in the *Aurora*, of the turn they intend to give the business, and of the ground they mean to occupy; but I do

Library of Congress

not believe they will be able to maintain *that* , or any *other* much longer. With very great esteem etc.

***To BUSHROD WASHINGTON**

Mount Vernon, April 22, 1798.

My dear Bushrod: Enclosed are Deeds from me to General Lee, and from him to me. They were copied from his original Deed to me, without my previous examination of it, supposing (I understood it was drawn by Mr. Charles Lee) that it was correct in all its parts. When we were about to execute the New ones I found that his title to the old one was not recited; whether this

is essential to the conveyance I know not, as the Lands are accurately described and he has, as he says, Doctr. Skinners conveyance to him wch. he will send me. The Patents from the Commonwealth to Skinner I have. If the Deeds enclosed are valid please to have them recorded, if not return them with your observations. I hope they are good wishing to have no more trouble with them. Yours Affectionately.

***To GEORGE DENEALE**

Mount Vernon, April 22, 1798.

Sir: In answer to the enquiry contained in your letter of the 18th instant, respecting the issue of the suit which had been brought against Thomson Mason, I am sorry to inform you that I can say nothing which would be explicit, or satisfactory.

It is near 20 years since I had any Agency in the concerns of the deceased Mrs. Savage. My Public occupations, and long absences from this State, threw the whole of that business on the Revd. Mr. Fairfax; from whom *alone* you will be able to get the information Mr. Dixon has asked. And very unsatisfactory I fear it will prove, as Doctr Savage while living, and his followers since, have had recourse to all the chicane and subterfuge which

Library of Congress

could be practiced, to wrong the above Lady and defraud her creditors; of whom I am one, for money *lent her* . I am etc.

P.S. It is possible Colo. Simms can give you some information respecting this business as I believe he was employed as an Attorney to prosecute in behalf of the trustees.

***To EDWARD GRAHAM**

Mount Vernon, April 25, 1798.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 9th. Ulto, but am not enabled to answer it satisfactorily. The burthen of obtaining the Grants for 200,000 acres of land under Governor Dinwiddie's Proclamation of 1754, and indeed the greater part of the expence attending this business, from the first move that was made therein until the issuing of the Patents, were thrown upon me, nor has the latter been re-embursed to this day.

It was with great difficulty after Peace was established in the year 1763, that I could obtain a recognition of the above proclamation; and then, instead of assigning a district, and permitting every Claimant to locate his own quantum therein, we were compelled to take the *whole* quantity in twenty Surveys; or rather not allowed to exceed that number. This it was that occasioned so many names to be jumbled together in the same Patent and has caused the difficulties which have since occurred to the Patentees, to obtain their respective quantities. The same happened to myself; but rather than be at the trouble and expence of dividing with others, I bought, and exchanged, until I got entire tracts to myself.

After the Patents were granted and the Land thereby secured, I concerned myself no further with any part thereof except my own, than to give the notice you have alluded to; and am altogether ignorant of the measures the Patantees have taken to ascertain their proportions; consequently can afford you no satisfactory information on the subject of your enquiry. I am etc.

***To THOMAS PINCKNEY**

Mount Vernon, May 6, 1798.

Dear Sir: Permit me to give you the trouble of the enclosed letter to Mr. Horry, in acknowledgment of one I received from him at Baltimore. I do this on the uncertainty of its finding him in Philadelphia, and because, in his letter to me, he did not say whether he should return to Charleston by Land or Water.

I am sorry to find by the Gazettes that you have had but indifferent health since your arrival at Philadelphia. When you return, but when will that be? I hope you will not forget that this place is very little out of your direct route, and that halting days are essential in long marches.

Mrs. Washington &ca. unite with me in best respects to Mrs. Pinckney and yourself, and I am etc.

***To CHARLES L. PINCKNEY HORRY**

Mount Vernon, May 6, 1798.

Sir: A Post or two ago favoured me with a note from you dated the 23d. Ulto, accompanying your answr. to Paine's letter, addressed to me.

For the favourable sentiments you have been pleased to express for me in both, I feel grateful; and pray you to accept this acknowledgment of the sense I entertain of them.

Until the Gazettes announced your

arrival in Philadelphia I was unacquainted with your route from Baltimore. Should your return to Charleston be by land, I shall be happy in seeing you at this place; about nine miles from Alexandria and but little out of the Post Road. I am etc.

***To THE SECRETARY OF WAR**

Mount Vernon, May 6, 1798.

Dear Sir: Amongst the variety of matters which have come before Congress for the purpose of preparation, in the dernier resort; in short as a salutary measure at all times, and under all circumstances; Arsenals and Cannon Founderies, have occupied its attention.

This leads me to ask what steps have been taken relative to the site for one at the Mouth of the Shanondoah? I will pledge myself that there is not a spot in the United States wch. combines more, or greater requisites for these, than that does; considered either as a place of immense strength against, and inaccessible by an enemy; although open to *inland* navigation in all directions, as well crosswise as to the Shipping Port at the Federal City, and water transportation to the Western Country; for its centrality among Furnices and Forges. for its inexhaustible supply of Water, having the *whole* River of Shanondoah as a resourse, and for the populous and plentiful country in which it lyes.

I do not suppose that a place of this importance, and which has already cost

the United States several thousand dollars (to be possessed of the ground) has passed unnoticed; but not having heard it mentioned in the progress of the discussions, or that any thing has been done on the premises since the purchase of it under the former Act, has induced this enquiry; which you will answer, or not, as it suits your convenience, not doubting but that you have matters of more importance to attend to than the solution of my question.

The Demo's seem to be lifting up their heads again, according to Mr. Bache. They were a little crest fallen; or one might say, thunder stricken, on the publication of the Dispatches from our Envoys; but the contents of them are now resolved into harmless chit-chat and trifles, less than was, or ought to have been expected from the misconduct of the

Library of Congress

Administration; that it is better to submit to such chastisement than to hazard greater evils by futile resentment. So much for a little consultation among them. I am etc.

***To THOMAS LAW**

Mount Vernon, May 7, 1798.

Dear Sir: After you left this on friday last, Mr. Lewis put into my hands your letter without a date.

It is unnecessary I hope, to assure you that your generous offers of a lot near

the Seat of Congress, and of five thousand dollars on loan to commence a building in the City, were received with grateful sensibility, and thanks; at the sametime, let me entreat you not to consider as a slight, my declining to accept the advantages of either.

Already, I have more lots in the City than I shall be able to improve; and I have no disposition to speculate in them. To prevent jealousy, while the concerns of the Government were under my guidance, and suspicion that I had a greater predeliction to one part of the City than to another, I purchased four lots at each end of it; valuable in my estimation for different purposes; those on the Eastern branch on account of Commerce, which I always did, and still do think, will center there; the other as a site for a private Gentleman to live at.

It has always been my intention to build on the latter, whensoever the means were within my reach; hitherto they have not; and as it has been a maxim with me from early life, never to undertake anything without perceiving a door to the accomplishment, in a reasonable time and with my own resources, the measure has been delayed, rather unexpectedly.

My Estate (though it might sell, on credit, for a tolerable sum) has been, and probably will continue to be, far from a productive one: and it has so happened, that the proceeds of Landed and other Sales from it, hitherto, have been appropriated in a great measure to

Library of Congress

the expences my late situation obliged me, in a manner, to encounter; and I might add, in another way also which was neither expected or desired, but became necessary from causes which it would be useless to mention.

The buildings which I have erected

and yet find occasion to erect on my Mount Vernon Estate (and which may, by some, be considered as no indication of the want of money) have required very little advance of that article, being done almost wholly within myself: far otherwise would be the case with undertakings of a similar kind in the City, where workmen's wages and every material (although they may have fallen from what they have been) would come very high.

We shall always have pleasure in visiting Mrs. Law and you, in New Jersey Avenue; and if Mrs. Washington keeps well, we will, after Nelly Custis returns give you a Sample of it. We unite in Affectionate regards for you both, and for the Child, and I am etc.⁵⁵

***To WILLIAM HERBERT**

Mount Vernon, May 8, 1798.

Dear Sir: The Notes undermentioned you will please to deposit in the Bank of Alexandria; and when the contents of them are received, to carry the same to the credit of Dear Sir
Your etc.

1798

Jany. 17th. Jas. Patton and Jas. Dykes 120 days\$1600

Mar. 1.Jesse Simms90 Do514. 70

5.William Wilson60 Do1500. *

Library of Congress

(*)Mr. Wilson has a demand upon me for about 400 Bushels of Salt, for the amt. of which he shall receive a Check on the Bank so soon as the precise sum is ascertained by Go: W.

55. From *District of Columbia Letters and Papers* in the Library of Congress.

***To SIR JOHN SINCLAIR**

Mount Vernon, May 15, 1798.

Sir: Permit me to introduce to your acquaintance and civilities my good friend and neighbour the Reverend Bryan Fairfax who is, though he has not taken upon himself the title, the Baron of Cameron.

Ill health, and advice that Sea Air might be a mean of restoring his health, have induced him to take a Voyage to England. The integrity of his heart and benevolence of his mind, need only to be known to procure him esteem, and as I can vouch for these I shall introduce him to you as a Gentleman worthy of your attention. I have the honor etc.⁵⁷

***To WILLIAM STRICKLAND**

Mount Vernon, May 15, 1798.

Sir: Your favour of the 26th. of Novr. last, introductory of Mr. Miles Smith; I have had the pleasure to receive; but not that of seeing the Gentleman himself. I have, however, expressed in a letter to him, the gratification this would afford me, if business or inclination should induce him to visit the State of Virginia.

The chief object of giving you the trouble of receiving this Address, at this time, is to introduce to your civilities my good friend and neighbour, the Revd. Bryan Fairfax; who is, though he has not taken the title, Baron of Cameron since the death of the late Lord, Robert Fairfax.

Library of Congress

Bad health, and the recommendation

57. Introductory letters, similar in substance, were also written, May 15, to Rufus King and the Earl of Buchan. Press copies of these are in the *Washington Papers*.

of Sea Air, have induced this Gentleman to make a Voyage to England, whether he will travel in it, or not, depends, I presume, upon the state of the former. but if he should visit Yorkshire, I can, from a long and intimate acquaintance with him, say that he will be found worthy of your attentions. With very great esteem, etc.

***To SIR JOHN SINCLAIR**

Mount Vernon, May 15, 1798.

Sir: The motive which I assigned in my letter of the 6th. of Novr. (a copy of which, with others, is herewith enclosed) for transmitting you a duplicate of a long, private letter of the 11th. Decemr. 1796, having encreased for my not having yet received an acknowledgment of it; and having undoubted information that the Vessel by which the duplicate was sent has been taken by a Frh. Privateer, the masters of whom pay little respect to private letters; or any thing else indeed which they lay their hands on; has induced me (for the reasons assigned in the aforesaid letter of the 6th. of November) to forward a triplicate thereof. And as few of our Vessels escape their search, I send copies, as mentioned above, of all the letters I have had the honor of writing to you since that epoch, by my neighbour and friend, the Reverend Bryan Fairfax, who, though he has not taken the title, is the legitimate Baron of Cameron, and father of Ferdinando Fairfax, to whom, as you are informed in my letter of the 11th. of December, the Estate of Belvoir now belongs by devise from his Uncle, the Honble. George William Fairfax deceased.

A long continuance of bad health and a desire to try the effect of Sea Air are the principal, perhaps only, motives which have induced my neighbour to undertake a Voyage to England. He possesses as good a heart and as pure intentions as any man living, as such,

Library of Congress

I have no scruple in recommending him to your acquaintance and civilities. With very great esteem etc.

***To SARAH CARY FAIRFAX58**

Mount Vernon, May 16, 1798.

My dear Madam: Five and twenty years, nearly, have passed away since I have considered myself as the permanent resident at this place; or have been in a situation to indulge myself in a familiar intercourse with my friends, by letter or otherwise.

During this period, so many important events have occurred, and such changes in men and things

have taken place, as the compass of a letter would give you but an inadequate idea of. None of which events, however, nor all of them together, have been able to eradicate from my mind, the recollection of those happy moments, the happiest in my life, which I have enjoyed in your company.⁵⁹

Worn out in a manner by the toils of my past labour, I am again seated under my Vine and Fig tree, and wish I could add that, there are none to make us affraid; but those whom we have been accustomed to call our good friends and Allies, are endeavouring, if not to make us affraid, yet to despoil us of our property; and are provoking us to Acts of self-defence, which may lead to War. What will be the result of such measures, time, that faithful expositor of all things, must disclose. My wish is, to spend the remainder of my days (which cannot be many) in rural amusements; free from those cares [from] which public responsibility is never exempt.

Before the War, and even while it existed, altho' I was eight years from home at one stretch, (except the *en passant* visits made to it on my March to and from the Siege of Yorktown) I made considerable additions to my dwelling house, and alterations in my

Library of Congress

Offices, and Gardens; but the dilapidation occasioned by time, and those neglects which are coextensive with the absence of Proprietors, have occupied as much of my time, within the last twelve months in repairing them, as at any former period in the same space. and it is matter of sore regret, when I cast my eyes towards Belvoir, which I often do, to reflect that the former Inhabitants

59. *Cf.* Washington's letter to George William Fairfax, Feb. 27, 1785 (vol. 28), *ante*.

of it, with whom we lived in such harmony and friendship, no longer reside there; and that the rums can only be viewed as the memento of former pleasures; and permit me to add, that I have wondered often, (your nearest relations being in this Country), that you should not prefer spending the evening of your life among them rather than close the sublunary Scene in a foreign Country, numerous as your acquaintances may be, and sincere, as the friendships you may have formed.

A Century hence, if this Country keeps united (and it is surely its policy and Interest to do so) will produce a City, though not as large as London, yet of a magnitude inferior to few others in Europe, on the Banks of the Potomack; where one is now establishing for the permanent Seat of the Government of the United States (between Alexandria and Georgetown, on the Maryland side of the River). A situation not excelled for commanding prospect, good water, salubrious air, and safe harbour by any in the world; and where elegant buildings are erecting and in forwardness, for the reception of Congress in the year 1800.

Alexandria, within the last seven years, (since the establishment of the General Government) has increased in buildings, in population, in the improvement of its Streets by well executed pavements, and in the extension of its Wharves, in a manner, of which you can have very little idea. This shew of prosperity, you will readily [conceive, is owing to its commerce,] the extension of *that trade* is occasioned in [a great degree] by opening of the Inland navigation of the Potomack River;

Library of Congress

now cleared to Fort Cumberland, upwards of 200 miles, and by a similar attempt to accomplish the like [up the Shenandoah,] 150 miles more. In a word, if this Country can steer clear of European politics, stand firm on its [bottom], and be wise and temperate in its government, [it bids fair to be one of the greatest and happiest nations in the world.]

Knowing that Mrs. Washington is about to give you an account of the changes wch have happened in the neighbourhood and in our own family [I shall not trouble] you with a repetition of them;...⁶⁰ receive accurate information...from *particular* friends, from...and having only one...miles...I have not been as far as Occoquan these seven years;...from hoping it. Be that as it may,...and under all circumstances, I shall...be...⁶¹

***To JOSEPH HOPKINSON**

Mount Vernon, May 27, 1798.

Sir: An absence for more than eight days from home (on a visit to our friends in the Federal City) is offered as an apology for my not giving your polite, and obliging favour of the 9th. instant, an earlier acknowledgment.

I pray you now, my good Sir, to accept my best thanks for the Pamphlet and Song,⁶⁷ which accompanied it; and still more, for the favourable sentiments you have been pleased to express, in my behalf.

60. The press copy was poorly made. Words indicated by leaders [...] are illegible.

61. The draft of this letter from Martha Washington is in the writing of Washington. It is dated May 17, 1798, and is in the *Washington Papers*. It is printed in Ford's edition of *Washington's Writings*.

To expect that all men should think alike upon political, more than on Religious, or other subjects, would be to look for a change in the order of nature; but at so dangerous a crisis

Library of Congress

as the present, when every thing dear to Independence is at stake, the well disposed part of them might, one would think, act more alike; Opposition therefore to the major will, and to that self respect which is due to the National character, cannot but seem strange!

But I will unite with you in a fervent wish, and hope, that greater unanimity than heretofore, will prevail; for enough, I think we have seen, to remove the mist entirely; and that, the young men of the present day will not suffer the liberty for which their fore fathers fought, bled, and died, and obtained, [to] be lost by them; either by supineness, or divisions among themselves, disgraceful to the Country. I am, &c.

***To ALEXANDER HAMILTON**

Mount Vernon, May 27, 1798.

My dear Sir: Yesterday, brought me your Letter of the 19th. instant.⁶⁵ You may be assured, that my Mind is deeply impressed with the present situation of our public affairs, and not a little agitated by the outrageous conduct of France towards

65. Hamilton's letter was removed from the *Washington Papers* by John C. Hamilton and placed in the *Hamilton Papers*, which are now in the Library of Congress. Parts of it state: "In the event of an open rupture with France, the public voice will again call you to command the armies of your Country." He further suggested "a circuit through Virginia and North Carolina under some pretence of health &c. This would call forth addresses public dinners &c. which would give you an opportunity of expressing sentiments in Answering Toasts &c. which would throw the weight of your character into the scale of Government and revive an enthusiasm for your person that may be turned into the right channel."

the United States; and at the enemical conduct of its partisans among ourselves, who aid and abet their measures: You may believe further, from assurances equally sincere, that if there was anything in my power, which could be done with consistency to avert, or lessen the danger of the Crisis, it should be rendered with hand and heart.

Library of Congress

The expedient however, which has been suggested by you, would not in my opinion, answer the end which is proposed. The object of such a tour could not be veiled by the ostensible cover to be given to it; because it would not apply to the state of my health, which never was better: and as the measure would be susceptible of two interpretations, the enemies to it, always more active and industrious than friends, would endeavour, as much as in them lay, to turn it to their own advantage, by malicious insinuations; unless they should discover that the current against themselves was setting too strong, and of too serious a nature for them to stem; in which case the journey would be unnecessary, and in either case, the reception might not be such as you have supposed.

But, my dear Sir, dark as matters appear at present, and expedient as it is to be prepared at *all* points, for the worst that can happen; (and no one is more disposed to this measure than I am), I cannot make up my mind, *yet*, for the expectation of *open War*; or, in other words, for a formidable Invasion, by France. I cannot believe, although I think them capable of *any thing bad*, that they will attempt to do more than they have done; that when they perceive the spirit, and policy of

this country rising into resistance; and that they have falsely calculated upon support from *a large* part of the *People* thereof, to promote their views and influence in it, that they will desist, *even from those practices*; Unless unexpected events in Europe, and their possession of Louisiana and the Floridas, should induce them to continue the measure. And I believe further, that although the *leaders* of their party, in this country, will not change their sentiments, that they will be obliged nevertheless to change their plan, or the mode of carrying it on; from the effervescence which is appearing in all quarters, and the desertion of their followers, which must frown them into silence. at least for a while.

If I did not view things in this light, my mind would be infinitely more disquieted than it is; for if a crisis should arrive when a sense of duty, or a call from my Country, should become so imperious as to leave me no choice, I should prepare for the relinquishment, and go

Library of Congress

with as much reluctance from my present peaceful abode, as I should do to the tombs of my Ancestors.

To say at this time, determinately, what I should do under such circumstances, might be improper, having once before departed from a similar resolution; but I may declare *to you*, that as there is no conviction in my breast that I could serve my country with more efficiency in the command of the Armies, it might Levy, than many others,

an expression of its wish that I should do so, must somehow or other be unequivocally known, to satisfy my mind that, notwithstanding the respect in which I may be held on account of former services, that a preference might not be given to a man more in his prime. And it may well be supposed too, that I should like, previously, to know who would be my coadjutors, and whether you would be disposed to take an active part, if Arms are to be resorted to.⁶⁶

Before this letter can get to your hands, you will have seen the Resolutions and proposed address from Citizens of Charleston, in South Carolina. Their proceedings will, I am persuaded, give the ton to other parts of *that* State. Two or three very good Addresses have already appeared from No. Carolina; one with the Signature of a late Governor thereof, Spaight. All the upper most populous and hardy yeomanry of this State, have come, and are coming forward, with strong Addresses to the Executive and assurances of Support. The Address from Norfolk (I do not mean the impertinent one from Magnien's Grenadier Company) is a good one. The middle counties of this State, with two or three exceptions, have hitherto been silent; they want leaders; but I shall be much mistaken if a large majority of them do not forsake, if they have heretofore been with, those who have pretended to speak their Sentiments. As to the Resolutions which were entered into at Fredericksburgh, it is only necessary to point to the Manager of them; and add, that the meeting was partial.

Library of Congress

From Georgia no development of the public sentiment has made its appearance; but I have learnt from a very intelligent Gentleman just returned from thence, where he

66. Hamilton replied (June 2): "I have no scruple about opening myself to you on this point. If I am invited *to a station in which the service I may render may be proportioned to the sacrifice I am to make*; I shall be willing to go into the army. If you command, the place in which I should hope to be most useful is that of Inspector General with a command in the line." Hamilton's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

has been sometime for the benefit of his health; travelling, going and returning, slowly, and making considerable halts, that the people of that State, as also those of South and North Carolina, seem to be actuated by one spirit, *and that* , a very friendly one to the General Government. I have likewise heard, that the present Governor of the first (Georgia) professes to be strongly attached to it. These disclosures, with what may yet be expected, will, I conceive, give a different impression of the sentiments of our people to the Directory of France, than what they have been taught to believe; while it must serve to abash the partizans of it for their wicked, and presumptive information.

Your free communication on these political topics, is so far from needing an apology, that I shall be much gratified, and thankful to you, for the continuation of them; and I would wish you to believe, that with great truth and sincerity, I am always Your Affectionate friend, &c.

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, May 28, 1798.

Dear Sir: Enclosed you will receive my Power of Attorney to sell the sum of three thousand four hundred and ninety four dollars and thirty one cents, Six pt. Cent stock of the United States, which stands in my name on the Books in Philadelphia, and also the certificates of sd Stock.

Library of Congress

This stock is loaned by me for the use of the Potomack Company, and in the application thereof you will be pleased to follow

the advice of Mr. William Hartshorne, of Alexandria, the Treasurer of that Company.

There will yet remain a small sum to be received quarterly on the 3 pr Ct. Stock; but that I may not at any time draw for more than you have funds to answer, I pray you to inform me, (after the Coach and Table ornaments are sold) how the A/c between us stands, that I may make my remittances accord with the draughts. With esteem etc.

***To EDWARD CARRINGTON**

Mount Vernon, May 28, 68 1798.

Dear Sir: The present dangerous crisis of public affairs, makes me anxious to know the sentiments of our citizens in different parts of this Commonwealth;⁶⁹ and no one has a better opportunity to form an opinion of the central part thereof, than yourself. this will be my apology for giving you the trouble of a letter at this time.

Several Counties above the Blue ridge have come forward with warm addresses, and strong professions of support. From Norfolk two meetings, one *good* the other *bad*, have their proceedings detailed in the Gazettes. Meetings have taken place in a few of the middle Counties, with unpromising results; and an invitation was given for one, in Davis's Paper of the 15th to be held in Richmond, but I have heard nothing more concerning it. Let not any enquiries or gratifications of mine, interfere with your more important concerns;

68. Sparks and Ford date this letter May 30.

69. Virginia.

the devotion of a moment or two, of leisure, will suffice for Dear Sir &c.

***To JUDGE ALEXANDER ADDISON⁷⁴**

Mount Vernon, June 3, 1798.

Sir: I was favoured with your letter of the 17th. Ulto. by the last Post.

Not to have received the Instalment due to me on the Bond of the deceased Col. Ritchie (lodged in the Bank of Pennsylvania for collection) at the appointed period, is attended with considerable disappointment to me; and if it should not be paid (in whole) at the time mentioned in your Note the inconvenience will be sorely felt by me. To raise cash was the sole inducement to the Sale of my lands in Fayette and Washington Counties; and not to receive it, agreeably to contract, will defeat *my* object, and the expectation of *others* .

I pray you, Sir, to accept my thanks for the Pamphlet you had the goodness to send me, containing your remarks on Mr. Gallatin's Speech in the house of Representatives of the United States, on the foreign Intercourse Bill, and for the Gazette containing an Oration delivered in the Town of W—75 on the day recommended by the President to be observed as a General Fast.

Both of the productions I have read with equal attention and satisfaction; and although it has been justly observed in one of them, that to offer conviction to a person convinced before hand would be labour lost, yet, much good may, and I

74. U.S. District Judge in Pennsylvania.

75. Washington, Pa.

am persuaded will result, from the investigation of Political heresies, when the propagation of them is intended, evidently, to mislead the multitude; who, it is to be hoped, and as I verily believe, only require correct information to enable them to decide justly upon all National matters which are brought fairly, and properly before them; who, not like

Library of Congress

the Demagogues that attempt to impose upon their understandings, and are affraid to open their eyes, lest something should accost them, which might flash conviction, and embarrass them more in the prosecution of their system of opposition to the Wheels of Government which they have adopted, and at all events, it would seem, are determined to adhere to. With esteem I am etc.

[H.S.P.]

***To JUDITH SARGENT STEVENS MURRAY**

Mount Vernon, June 4, 1798.

Madam: Strange as the relation of it may appear, it is not less true, that your letter of the 29th. of March did not get to my hands untill yesterday; at which time your other favour of the 28th. Ultio was also received; for they came by the same Mail.

The Books, which were reed. in very good order, and has been read with very great pleasure; came at the times, and in the manner you directed, and are entitled to my best thanks. This acknowledgment would have been made at an earlier period had I not waited expecting to be advised, to whom, or how I should make payment (having forgot the terms of the Subscription)

and request now to be informed.

Had I received your favour of the 29th. of March with the first set of the Gleaner, I should, however I might have been indebted to your goodness for an excuse, have reproached myself severely for any delay in the acknowledgment of it, and of those favourable sentiments which on all occasions that have occured, you have been pleased to express in behalf of Madam Your etc.

Library of Congress

P.S. Mrs. Washington and Miss Custis are grateful for your kind remembrance of them and requests that their compliments may be presented to you in acceptable terms.

***To ROBERT LEWIS**

Mount Vernon, June 4, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 23d. Ult. has been received.

Mr. Aires's draught on Mr. Russell (of Alexandria) has been presented and accepted, payable in ten days.

I am glad to hear of your good luck with the eloped tenant in Berkeley county; Recovery of the Tenement is of more importance than the security of the Rest. I am not disposed to lease it for *more* than seven years, and if you could let it for a *shorter* term, to a *good* tenant I should prefer it: but act from circumstances and your best judgment in the case. If there is any defect in the old leases they must, by this time, have become obvious to you, and will, of course, be amended; I recollect nothing that requires alteration, if the Covenants are complied with, and if the old ones are not, it is not probable New ones will.

I am sorry to hear the unpromising account of your Wheat. Mine is bad enough, but many degrees better than the description of that in your parts; nor do I perceive any fly, as yet, amongst it; but there is sufficient time between this and harvest for the entire destruction of it by that Insect. The drought could not have been more severe with you than it was here, until the 23d. ulto. Since which we have had (for my lands) a superabundance of Rain. If it had continued a few days longer we should have made neither Oats nor Hay, and our Pastures would have starved the cattle that had escaped the Winter. What effect it might have had on the Wheat I know not, but I never form an opinion of Corn until the month of August; nor despair of making a tolerable crop of that grain unless a drought happens when

Library of Congress

it is shooting and filling, be the weather what it may before. All here unite in best regards for Mrs. Lewis and yourself, and I remain your etc.

***To REVEREND WILLIAM LYNN**

Mount Vernon, June 4, 1798.

Revd. Sir: I received with thankfulness your favour of the 30th. Ult., enclosing the discourse delivered by you on the day recommended by the President of the United States to be observed as a general Fast. I have read them both with pleasure; and feel grateful for the favourable sentiments you have been pleased to

express in my behalf; but more especially for those good wishes which you offer for my temporal and eternal happiness; which I reciprocate with great cordiality, being with esteem and respect, Revd. Sir Your etc.

[H.L.]

***To JAMES LLOYD**

Mount Vernon, June 13, 1798.

Dear Sir: I have received, and thank you, for your favour of the 6th. instant and its enclosure.

It is very consoling to perceive such expressions of the spirited feelings of the Yeomanry, and other description of the people of this Country as appears in the Addresses, going from all quarters, to the President of the United States, and to Congress; and it is peculiar pleasing to find that *this Spirit* pervades the western parts of the Atlantic States.

Much is it to be wished that, this unanimity might effect a change in the conduct, even if it should produce no conviction in the minds, of *some* of the leaders of opposition.

Library of Congress

What are the Sentiments of the People of Kentucky? Or has there been any reverberation yet? With esteem etc.

***To REVEREND JEREMY BELKNAP**

Mount Vernon, June 15, 1798.

Revd. Sir: Your favour of the 29th Ult. accompanying the Discourse delivered on the day recommended by the President of the U States to be observed for a Fast, was received in the usual course of the Mail, from Boston; and the copies therewith sent, were forwarded agreeably to your desire. My best wishes attend the prosecution of your American Biography, and (not recollecting whether the request was made before) I desire I may be considered as a Subscriber to the first Volume. To the Proposal which came under cover to me, I have fixed my name; and will lodge the Paper in the hands of a Gentleman in Alexandria for the convenience of those who may incline to become Subscribers thereto; and thereafter to return it to you.

My information relative to the family of Calvert, is more limited than the one detailed by you. I know little more of it than what is recited in the history of Virginia; but I will send a transcript of so much of your letter as relates to this subject, to a well informed Gentleman of my acquaintance in Maryland, Judge Chase, and give you the result.

I know of no other Histories of Virginia than those mentioned in your letter. But I recollect well, to have heard the late Richard Bland of Prince George Cty. say, before the Revolution, that he was either possessed of, or was collecting materials, and hoped to furnish a more correct history of it than any that was then extant. He was very competent to the undertaking, being a man of erudition and intelligence; long a member of the Councils of this State, and afterwards a

member of the first Congresses that were held in Philadelphia: I cannot add however that he was the Author of the M. S78 transmitted to you by Carter B. Harrison. Colo.

Library of Congress

Bland, the person of whom I am speaking, has been dead more than twenty years. Bishop Madison, with whom you seem to be in the habit of corresponding, is as likely to give information on the point sought after by you, as any *one person* I am acquainted with. To the descendant of a Gentleman, (the Honble Richd Corbin, many years deceased) who it is said possessed some valuable notes relative to ancient transactions, and the actors of those times in this State, I will write; and if any thing worthy of notice is, obtained, you shall be furnished therewith.

If I can render you any service, in procuring materials for your valuable Biography, I shall feel pleasure in doing it. I hope both life and health will be dispensed to you by him, in whose hands all things are, until *this* and many others of your good works are completed. For the Discourse, which you were so obliging as to send me, and for the favourable sentiments with which it was accompanied, I pray you to accept the best thanks of Revd. Sir, &c.

78. Manuscript.

***To THE TRUSTEES OF WASHINGTON ACADEMY**

Mount Vernon, June 17, 1798.

Gentlemen: Unaccountable as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that the Address with which you were pleased to honor me, dated the 12th. of April, never came to my hands until the 14th. Instant.

To promote Literature in this rising Empire, and to encourage the Arts, have ever been amongst the warmest wishes of my heart. And if the donation which the generosity of the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Virginia has enabled me to bestow on Liberty-Hall, now by your politeness called, Washington Academy, is likely to prove a mean to accomplish these ends, it will contribute to the gratification of my desires.

Library of Congress

Sentiments like those which flowed from your Pen, excite my gratitude, whilst I offer my best vows for the prosperity of the Academy, and for the honor and happiness of those under whose auspices it is conducted.

***To JUSTICE SAMUEL CHASE**

Mount Vernon, June 17, 1798.

Dear Sir: A letter of which the enclosed is an extract, has lately been received by me from the Reverend Mr. Belknap (of New Hampshire) who is writing an American Biography.

As Mr. Belknap is a man of character and abilities, writes well, and seems anxious to be correct in what he gives to the World, he merits encouragement; and Aid from those who have it in their power to afford it. If I was able to solve the queries contained in the extract, I would have asked no assistance;

but having no knowledge of the family of Calvert, further than is recited in the history of Virginia, and believing that no person is better able to give the particulars of it than you are, must be my apology for troubling with this Address: to which let me add assurances of being, Dear Sir, Your etc.⁷⁹

***To FRANCIS CORBIN**

Mount Vernon, June 17, 1798.

Sir: A letter, of which the enclosed is an extract, has lately been received by me from the Revd. Mr. Belknap (of New Hampshire) who is writing an American Biography.

As Mr. Belknap is a man of character and abilities, writes, well, and seems anxious to be correct in what he gives to the Public, he merits encouragement; and aid from those who have it in their power to afford it.

Library of Congress

Recollecting to have heard, many years ago, that *your* deceased father possessed many valuable notes of *his* father, relative to men and things in the early period of our history, I have conceived that it might be in your power to furnish Mr. Belknap with some useful information from that source; and it is the only apology I can make for giving you the trouble of receiving this Address from Sir, Your etc.

79. From the press copy in the *Washington Papers*. The original is in the possession of Mrs. Theodore Vogel, of Washington, D. C.

***To EDWARD SAVAGE**

Mount Vernon, June 17, 1798.

Sir: I have been favoured with your letter of the 3d. instt, and pray you to receive my thanks for your attention in chusing the Prints which you sent to Colo. Biddle, for my use. As Mrs. Washington also does for your politeness in presenting her one in colours. We are pleased to hear that the undertaking has succeeded so well. Colo. Biddle, I presume, has paid you for the first four; being so directed. Mrs. Washington offers her Compliments to you and Mrs. Savage, and I am etc.

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, June 17, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 9th. instant is received. I am sorry to find that the old Coach is likely to find so bad a Market. This was slipped by Mr. Dandridge, at the time I left Philadelphia. As the case now is, it will be better to break it up for the old Iron than keep it longer on expences. And if, after trying the Table Ornaments awhile longer, at a reduced price, they will not sell, I must give some further order respecting them.

Library of Congress

After the Pictures from Mr. Savage are paid for, and such other exhibits as are against me, entered, let me know how our A/c stands, as I shall be unwilling, at all times, to call upon you faster than you have means to answer. In the meantime please to send me one gilt frame, for a Picture, of the following dimensions, viz, four feet by three feet, two Inches in the clear; allowing a rabbit of an Inch, all round, to receive

the Picture; and $\frac{3}{4}$ of an Inch deep for the same purpose. Let this frame cost a dollar a foot. What I mean by the clear is, that so much of the Canvas, or Picture is to be seen, and by the Rabbit, that so much thereof is to be covered by the Frame.

When the Picture for Mrs. Miller (late Mrs. Green) is sent, be so good as to accompany it with Mrs. Washington's compliments. With esteem etc.

***To THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES**

Mount Vernon, June 17, 1798.

Dear Sir: I have heard with much pleasure, that you contemplate plate a visit to the City designated for the permanent Seat of Government of the U. States, in the course of the Summer, or early in Autumn.

It is unnecessary, I hope, for me in that event, to express the satisfaction it would give Mrs. Washington and me to see Mrs. Adams, yourself and Company in the shade of our Vine and Fig tree; but I shall request that while you remain in these parts, that your would make Mount Vernon your Head Quarters. It is but about 17 Miles by land, and less by water from the Federal City; and only half that distance from

Alexandria, which is on the direct rout between them.

I pray you to believe that, no one has read the various approbatory Addresses, which have been presented to you, with more heart-felt satisfaction than I have done; nor are there

Library of Congress

any who more sincerely wish that your Administration of the Government may be easy, happy, and honorable to yourself, and prosperous for the Country.

Present, if you please, the best respects of Mrs. Washington, Miss Custis and myself to mrs. Adams and Miss Smith, accept them yourself, and be assured of the high esteem and regard, with which I have the honor &c.

***To JULIAN URSYN NIEMCEWICZ**

Mount Vernon, June 18, 1798.

Sir: The letter with which you were pleased to honor me, dated "City of Washington 14th. June" instt. was forwarded by Mr. Law, and received from the Post Office in Alexandria yesterday.

The pleasure this family derived from the favour of your Company in our retired Situation, could only be equalled by the regret we felt at parting with you; and by our wishes if you should again visit this part of the United States, that you would not pass the shades of Mount Vernon without participating in the refreshment of them.

That your country is not as happy as your struggle to make it so, was Patriotic and Noble, is a matter which all lovers of national Liberty and the Rights of Man, have sorely lamented: and if

my Vows, during the arduous contest could have availed, you would *now* , have been as happy in the enjoyment of these desirable blessings under your own Vine and Fig Tree, as the People of these United States may be under theirs.

The flattering expressions of your letter, excites all my Sensibility, and in making a tender of the best wishes of Mrs. Washington and Miss Custis for your polite remembrance of them, I do not forget to pray, although I am persuaded, nothing can eradicate from a mind susceptible as yours is, the recollection of those misfortunes which have befallen your

Library of Congress

Country, that you may experience in this, such attentions, as may have a tendency to alleviate the poignancy of them.

With very great esteem etc.⁸¹

To THE SECRETARY OF WAR

Mount Vernon, June 22, 1798.

Dear Sir: I am not disposed to withdraw your attention from more important matters; or to be troublesome in any degree; or to press my Correspondence upon you. But not having even heard whether my letter, of which the enclosed is taken from a Press copy ever reached your hands, I am induced to make the enquiry.

I wish also to know what has been done with a letter of mine, put under cover to you (early in March last) to be forwarded, or suppressed

81. The letter sent is in the possession (1938) of Pierre Beres, of Paris, France.

at your discretion, to a Mr. John Parker, who exhibited Proposals to the Public, for compiling a complete Edition of *All the Journals of Congress* from the earliest period of them down to the present day?⁸² With respect, I am etc.

[N.Y.P.L.]

***To JAMES LLOYD**

Mount Vernon, June 25, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 25th. Instant has been duly received, and I feel much obliged by your polite attentions to me.

Library of Congress

I rejoiced to hear of General Marshall's arrival, and wish sincerely that he had been accompanied by his Colleagues, for I believe no Country will afford them better protection than their own. The stay of one of them,⁸³ has a misterious appearance after having jointly declared, "that no one of them is authorised to take upon himself a Negociation evidently entrusted by the letter of the Powers and Instructions to the whole," and that too, after the invidious distinction was made by the minister of foreign Relations; which ought in my opinion, to have filled him with resentment, instead of complaisance.

I wonder the French Government has not more pride than to expose to the world such flimsy performances as the ministers of it exhibit by way of *complaint and argument* . But it is still more to be wondered at, that these charges, which have been refuted over and over again, should find men...⁸⁴ The Editor of the Aurora...and bolder! Whence his support? How does the advocating French...account for the...the British?...

82. McHenry answered (June 26): "With respect to Parker. I would have delivered him your letter, had I not learned, that he had connected himself with a Democrat printer, one Follwel, who conducts the work he had undertaken, I thought it best therefore, not to give a person the countenance of your name whose politics, according to my information intitled him to none." Later, in this same letter, he wrote: "Gerry has been playing the double politician, and besides a very foolish and hurtful game. He held conversations and consultations with Tallyrand, which he concealed for some time from his colleagues, or till they could no longer be concealed...he has been addressed today, in a manner which he will find it difficult to misconstrue, and which...will prevent him from doing further mischief, or longer sporting with the honour dignity and interests of his country....I think it probable that letters of Marque and reprisal will be shortly declared. You see how the storm thickens and that our vessel will soon require its antient pilot. Will you, may we flatter ourselves, that in a crises so awful and important you will accept the command of all our armies? I hope you will, because you alone, can unite all hearts and hands, if it is possible that they can be united." McHenry's letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

Library of Congress

83. Elbridge Gerry,

84. The press copy was poorly made. Words indicated by leaders [...] are illegible.

***To TOBIAS LEAR**

Mount Vernon, June 25, 1798.

Dear Sir: You will perceive by the enclosed what manner I am disappointed in receiving the Rent for my house in Alexandria. These things put you, the payer and myself, in an aukward situation; for it must seem strange to demand what has been paid. I must therefore request, in explicit terms, that you will receive no more monies due to me; and I should be glad to have a statement of the A/c as it stands between us, since the last was rendered; it appearing by information from my Collector in Montgomery County, Maryland, that some part of my

Rents there, had been paid to you since the period above mentioned.

I have not the smallest doubt of my being credited for every farthing you receive on my A/c; but that does not remedy the evil. With sincere esteem and regard, I am etc.

***To TOBIAS LEAR**

Mount Vernon, June 26, 1798.

Dear Sir: Mr. Anderson requesting that the boy who was going to the Post Office yesterday, might call and deliver a letter to you, from him, concerning flour. Availing myself of that conveyance, I sat down, and was in the act of writing the hasty lines you received from me by him, when I was summoned to dinner. In my hurry to close and Seal it, I omitted the enclosure then refered to, and which is now forwarded.

Library of Congress

I can only repeat, what I mentioned yesterday, that I never had the most distant suspicion that every farthing that you had received, or might receive on my A/c, would be justly credited; but this will not supply my wants, and it would be uncandid and inconsistent with the frankness of friendship, not to declare that I have not approved, nor cannot approve, of having my money received and applied to uses not my own, without my consent; and even without advice of it; which, among other improprieties of the measure, involves the awkward, and pleasant consequences mentioned in my letter of yesterday.

You must be too well acquainted with the product of my Farms, and the expence I live at, to need information that my income, arising from them, would not meet my expenditures; and that, had it not been for monies arising from the Sale of Lands, my business must have stopped; or my embarrassments at this moment would have been great: and in this last resource, I have met with disappointments; for of three, nay four, Instalments for different tracts of land, *now*, and sometimes *since* due, I see no likelihood of receiving a shilling.

I do not bring these facts to your view with intention of reminding you of your Debt to me. On the contrary, take your own time, and convenience, to pay it; but let the *whole a/c* be settled, that I may see, and know the precise statement of the Balance between us. With the greatest esteem and friendship, I remain etc.

***To WILLIAM AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON**

Mount Vernon, June 26, 1798.

My dear Sir: If you could have foreseen the length of passage, to which your letter of the 23d. of April was destined, there would have been no occasion to have hurried yourself in writing it in order to receive a conveyance by the brother of Mr. Neale: for Saturday last was (and by the way of Richmond too,) the first of its appearance in my hands.

Library of Congress

Knowing that Mr. Corbin Washington had arrived safe in Westmoreland, and presuming that he had delivered my letter to you; I was

unable to account for your silence; as a letter, deposited in any of the Post Offices, would be certain of a conveyance.

It would, I am certain, be very difficult to fix a price at this time, in a contract for Corn of seven years continuance, that might not bear hard upon one side or the other before the expiration thereof, and my only reasons for proposing of it (the chances being equal) was, that each party might know *precisely* what it had to trust to. I have no objection however to make the quantity, while both of us are alive, certain; that is, five hundred barrels; and leave the value to the Alexandria *cash price* at the moment of its delivery, to be ascertained by one, two or more respectable purchasers of *that* article in *that* place.

You will observe that I have marked the *Cash price*. the reason is obvious, for all others are vague and indefinite; because there are too many purchasers in that, as well as in other places who will engage to give *anything* on credit, and pay *nothing*; as I have, and you might have experienced, if your Agents had not been cautious men. and because I would contract to pay on the delivery of the Grain.

The times most convenient for me to receive it, would be in the months of April. May and June; after the Vernal Equinox: and if there were intervals between the delivery of the respective loads of a fortnight, three weeks, or even a month it would be more accomodating than inconvenient to me.

If you accede to these proposals, I will contract for five hundred barrels annually; and if my Distillery goes on, to the contrary of which I know nothing, at present, it is more than probable

I might take five hundred barrels more from you, yearly, which would give you a certain market and sure pay, at the Alexandria *Cash price* at the time of delivering *each* load; to

Library of Congress

be ascertained in the manner before mentioned; to do which there can be *no* difficulty as the Books of the purchasers will shew what it was on any day in the year. On credit this would be uncertain, because the man who means to pay punctually at the end of two, three, four or six months, will not go beyond a certain price; whereas another, who knows before hand that he shall not be punctual, or possibly, that he shall never pay, is not very scrupulous with regard to price.

If I should see Mr. Anderson (my Manager) before this letter is closed, I will enquire if he is in want of Corn for the Distillery and let you know. He (though I do not blame him) has made a bad hand in the purchase of that article, this year; having given Sixteen, and from that to 18/. in the Winter ready money when two dollars Cash cannot now be had for it at Norfolk. So Doctor Stuart informs me, who has received this advice from the Manager of Mr. Custis's Estate on York River, where there is a large quantity of it for Sale. The price of Corn in Alexandria, at this moment, I know not. Our best wishes attend you and family, and I am etc.⁸⁵

85. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach. of New York City.

***To JAMES LLOYD**

Mount Vernon, June 27, 1798.

Sir: Accept my thanks for your favour of the 21st. Instant, and its enclosure. When the *whole* correspondence between our Envoys and the French Minister of Foreign Relations⁸⁶ and his agents is brought into one view, and laid before the Public, it will be extremely interesting; and must, I conceive, carry conviction to every mind that is open to it, of what the French now are, and have been aiming at, from the beginning of their Revolution; or from an early period of it, at least. And will, at the sametime shew them,

Library of Congress

in what manner they have been imposed upon by those whose objects were not to be promoted by truth, or a clear understanding of matters.

Genl. Marshall is so capable of making accurate observations, that I am persuaded his information may be relied on with certainty. With great esteem etc.

***To ARCHIBALD McCLEAN**

Mount Vernon, July 4, 1798.

Sir: In answer to your letter of the 2d, which I received yesterday; I inform you that I am not indisposed to part with my small tract (587 Acres) fifteen miles below Wheeling on the Ohio: nor to receiving improved property in the Town of Alexandria in exchange for it; provided you will allow the value I set upon my land, and will take what indifferent and disinterested men shall say is the worth of yours.

86. In the so-called "X. Y. Z." affair.

I have refused eight dollars an Acre for the tract above mentioned and have held it at ten dollars. If you have ever been on it, a description thereof is unnecessary. If you have not I believe I may venture to pronounce it the most valuable tract, for its size, on that part of the River; being in the shape of a horse shoe; and all bottom of the richest quality, excepting high ground for buildings, &ca. I am etc.⁹¹

***To FERDINANDO FAIRFAX**

Mount Vernon, July 4, 1798.

Dear Sir: I have given the enclosed as attentive a reading as the time allowed, and the letters I had to write by the Mail of this day, would permit.

Library of Congress

The observations appear to me to be well founded. But as I have formed no decisive opinion or determination with respect to my own S—s.⁹⁰ As there are blanks to be filled in the Address. And as there is a Reference to a work I have either never seen, or if seen have forgotten; I would request, under these circumstances, that the Dedication of your Work to me for which I feel sensible of the honor, may not be accompanied with the Words “by permission.” With very great esteem etc.

91. The original of the letter sent is in the possession of Paul Steinbrecker & Co., of Chicago, Ill.

90. Status.

***To TOBIAS LEAR**

Mount Vernon, July 4, 1798.

Dear Sir: I have received your letter and A/c of the 2d. Instt. and presume it is all right. I wish however you had charged the Scow, and given credit for the articles had from Mr. Anderson, as it was my wish to have seen a complete State of it.

The thousand dollars lent, was not on usury; and therefore I desire it may be struck out of your A/c, as I shall do it out of mine, when it comes to be entered in my Ledger. I mean the Interest, which you have given me credit for \$60. And it is not my desire, as I mentioned in my former letter, that you should put yourself to any inconvenience in paying the principal.

I have been so much engaged for the few days, past, that I have been unable to look into my accounts whatever; of course, I cannot now say what has been charged to me, as paid to you. I recollect however, that this was plead, when my Collector in Maryland was called upon for my Rents.

Library of Congress

My Papers are yet in such a jumble, that I know not where, readily to look for your former A/c; but it dwells upon my Memory that in that, I was charged with £50 paid the Trustees of the Academy in Alexandra. if I am right in this, the Treasurer thereof, has received a years annuity more than the School is entitled to. Reference to your Books, if you have them by you, or to the A/c rendered to me when I come across it, will decide the matter at once. With very great esteem etc.

***To HENRY PHILIPS**

Mount Vernon, July 8, 1798.

Sir: I have been favoured with your obliging letter of the 24th. Ult^o,⁹² explaining a matter which before the receipt of it, was to me, an enigma.

A case to my Address was of course opened, when two elegant Prints appearing therein, unaccompanied with a letter, made me suspect that there must have been a mistake in the direction; and, under this impression, I was about to repack them; and should have done so, if I had known where, or to whom to have sent them.

Permit me now, my good Sir, to offer my grateful thanks, through you, to Mr. F. Philips your brother,⁹³ for this instance of his politeness to me, and to request the favour of you to make my apology to him for not having done so at an earlier period, for Pictures so much, and so deservedly admired.⁹⁴

Present me, I pray you, in terms most acceptable to Mrs. Philips, to which Please to add those of Mrs. Washington, and our joint respects and compliments to Mr. Chews family. I am etc.

***To THOMAS PETER**

Mount Vernon, July 8, 1798.

Library of Congress

Dr. Sir: I have been duly favored with your letter of the 2d. of July; and enclosed are the two Tobacco notes which were forwarded to me by you, and another which had been

92. In the *Washington Papers*.

93. Francis Philips.

94. Philips states that his brother (Francis Philips) "felt himself so much obliged by your attention to him that he has sent out to me an etching and proof Print of a celebrated Painting by the late Mr. Wright of Derby in England, with a request that I would beg your acceptance of them in his name, which I now beg leave to do; the Print is called 'the Dead Soldier.'"

paid some time before to Mr. Lear. Nos. &ca. as below.⁹⁵ and request the favour of you to dispose of them in safe hands, for what they will fetch. In this case giving 60 or 120 days credit will make but little difference with me; A promissory note being given for the amount. We are glad to hear you are all well. we are as usual, and I am etc.

***To REVEREND JEREMY BELKNAP**

Mount Vernon, July 12, 1798.

Revd. Sir: Agreeably to the promise contained in my last, I put your "Proposal for continuing and enlarging the Subscription for the American Biography &ca." into the hands of a friend of mine in Alexandria, for the purpose of obtaining Subscribers, and enclosed you will receive the result. With great esteem etc.

***To DANIEL OF ST. THOMAS JENIFER**

Mount Vernon, July 15, 1798.

Library of Congress

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 6th, enclosing notes for two hogsheads of Tobo. paid you by Mr. Dunnington on a/c of Rent due me, has been received; and a receipt given to him for the same.

For your continued trouble in this business,

95. The numbers and weights are entered at the end of this letter.

I thank you; and although I am in real want of the amount of the Bond he gave, payable last January; yet, if he will exert himself to discharge it in the course of the year I shall [not object to?] waiting that time to [enter] a suit for the recovery of it as you conceive he means fair; otherwise it would be only gaining on his, and loosing time on my part.

If you should have occasion to visit the Neighbourhood where my land lyes, I would thank you to visit, and give me your opinion of the adequacy of the Rent for the present rent is altogether of Mr. Dunningtons own fixing. If you should not have any call into those parts, it is yet possible that you might obtain this information from others who know it well; and the relation it bears to the Rent of other Tenements of similar size and quality of Soil thereabouts and at what price it would sell by the Acre giving a credit, payable in Installments, with interest. With esteem etc.⁷

***To ARCHIBALD McCLEAN**

Mount Vernon, July 15, 1798.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 9th in reply to the answer I gave you, relative to the proposed exchange of property in Alexandria, for my small tract of Land on the Ohio, generated ally known and distinguished by the round bottom.

Library of Congress

You undoubtedly, have a right to fix your *own* price, upon your *own* property. but to prevent trouble, I beg leave to inform you, in decisive terms, that I will allow no more than what

7. The words in brackets are inserted as probable readings, as Washington inadvertently omitted some.

disinterested men (each of us chusing one, and a third, in case of disagreement, by those two) shall say it is worth.

Doctr. Craik has forgot the situation of my land. It is on the hither side of the Ohio, about 15 Miles from Wheeling and if I mistake not, in the same County. It is, without question (and allowed to be) the most valuable tract for its size in that Country and it is a matter of perfect indifference to me, whether I dispose of it for ten dollars an Acre, or not, two, or more years ago I refused eight dollars an acre and at this moment I have letters (unanswered on my Table) from four persons in pursuit of the tracts, some to buy, and others to Lease it.

That land within eight miles of Pittsburgh is to be bought for 20/. an Acre, I have no doubt; and if you had said for *half* that sum, it would have met with my entire belief; and yet the bargain might have been a hard one. I sold land 40 miles from it to Colo. Shreve for about 50/. an acre, and what followed? Why he kept as much as *he wanted* and sold the residue for upwards of four pounds an Acre, almost in the same breath. The value of land is estimated for the quality and local advantages; not by the cost. I am etc.

PS. Mr. Anderson my Manager, will look at your property in Alexa. and report any thing that you are disposed to say to—G. W.

***To THOMAS PETER**

Mount Vernon, July 15, 1798.

Library of Congress

Dear Sir: In discharge of Rent, for some land I have in Charles County, State of Maryland I have received the Tobacco, noted below.

If it will sell in George Town for its worth, I would thank you to dispose of it along with that last sent you, on the best terms you can, and it will much oblige Dear Sir Your etc.

Mark.Do.GrossTareNettdateWarehouse

GW117.1131.116.1015.April 25thNanjemoy

Do156.1120.100 1020 March 25Ditto

Total—2035

***To ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD**

Mount Vernon, July 15, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your favour of the 6th inst. has been duly received, but it came to hand when I was so much engaged, as not to be able to give it an earlier answer.

With respect to the land which Mr. Short was authorised to purchase for me, I have nothing to add; save a wish that he would get it as much *under* the price limited, as he can; for I have been disappointed in the receipt of money where I thought *no* disappointment *could* have happened. But will, notwithstanding, honour any draught of Mr. Short's that is made conformably to my former letter.

As the business committed to Mr. Field, went no further (if I recollect rightly) than to make preparatory enquiries, nothing further need be said on that head, until his report is received.

Library of Congress

But from your Acct. of Colonel Marshall's inactivity, corroborated by his silence, it seems indispensable that the situation of my lands on Rough Creek should be looked into without delay; and if Mr. Short would be so obliging as to do this, and would pay, or give me advice of what taxes are due upon those lands, it would intitle him to my best thanks; which should be rendered with a re-fund of any expence he may incur in the business the moment it is made known to me.

The family here, are much as usual, and unite with me in best regards for you, Mrs. Spotswood and all with you. With very great esteem I remain.

PS. I have written a Letter to Mr. Short,⁹ and placed it under cover with this, for you to read, seal, and deliver, or to forward, as the case may be.

8. The "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers* dates this July 16.

9. See Washington's letter to Peyton Short, July 16, 1798, *post*.

***To PEYTON SHORT¹⁶**

Mount Vernon, July 16, 1798.

Sir: General Spotswood having informed me of the trouble he was about to give you on my account, I have only to hope that it may not be great, at the same time that I assure you, that whatever is done under that Power and conformably thereto, shall be strictly complied with on my part.

One trouble Sir, frequently draws on another. It is some years since I requested my old acquaintance and friend, Colo. Marshall, to see that the Lands I hold on Rough Creek, in two tracts, of three and two thousand Acres, were not involved in any difficulty on acct. of the non-payment of Taxes. It is now sometime since he has drawn on one for the amount;

Library of Congress

to what cause owing I am unable to say. It is incumbent however on me to enquire, as I always have been willing, and still am ready, to pay whatever is due on them.

Will you permit me, my good Sir, to request the favour of you to make enquiry into this matter; and inform me of the result. And if time and the circumstances of the case, will not await a remittance from hence; that some means may be devised to pay the money there, which shall be returned with thanks and interest, so soon as it is made known to Sir Your etc.

***To RAWLEIGH COLSTON**

Mount Vernon, July 16, 1798.

Sir: Your letter of the 1st. of last month got safe to my hands, but long, very long after its date.

It would give me great concern if any act of mine should produce difficulty, or loss, to any of the purchasers of Colo. George Mercers land, sold under the Power of Attorney given to me, and others, for that purpose. But as this business has been taken out of my hands by a Decree of the High Court of Chancery, of this State; after the Papers have passed from me, and without recollecting (at this time) why a Deed did not pass in due form and time, or what, what the circumstance of the case is *now* ; to render my Agency, after an absolute relinquishment of it, conveys to my mind an odd appearance. Besides, the Conveyances which were made at the Sale, had a number of parties to them; to all of whose signatures there were Witnesses. Not less than five or six of these parties (to my knowledge) are dead; and the witnesses for the most part dead also, or dispersed; and, supposing the case otherwise, of what avail would their evidence be to Deeds of 25 years standing, which ought to have been recorded within eight months?

The farthest I have ever gone, since relinquishing the trust, was where the *old Deed* has, by neglect of the person to whom it was granted, been suffered to exceed the time,

Library of Congress

required by Law for its record, to certify before fresh witnesses on the back of it, that it was duly executed *at the time* and *in the manner* therein expressed. And

this I am ready to do in your case, if the case will admit of it; but to go into an *entire* new Conveyance under the circumstances I have mentioned, I should be very unwilling; unless I was well advised of the necessity and propriety of the measure by a professional and well informed character; who would consider, *thoroughly*, the case in all its relations, and under all its circumstances; to encounter the expence of which, I am not disposed; having already been saddled with a good deal on account of my Agency in that business, without ever receiving, or charging a copper for the trouble or expence for my several trips to Bullrun, Shannandoah, &ca; and paying Clerks and Sheriff notes, for many of the Bonds put in suit by Colo. Jno. F. Mercer for as much as they were instituted in my name, and being blended with others, could not well be separated or a farthing for Commission.

If Genl. Marshall, as the mutual friend of us both, would consider the case as above, with my difficulties, express in this letter, I dare say before hand, but I should find no scruple in carrying what he would advise, into effect. I am etc.

***To JUDITH SARGENT STEVENS MURRAY**

Mount Vernon, July 20, 1798.

Madam: I have been duly honoured with the receipt of your obliging favour of the 15th Ult^o, 20 and should have presented you with my acknowledgment of it sooner, but for the interesting event (to me) which has lately occurred, and has occupied all my time and attention.

For the highly flattering sentiments with which your letter is replete, and for the good wishes you

20. In the *Washington Papers*.

Library of Congress

are pleased to bestow on me, I render you all my gratitude, and reciprocate them with great cordiality, in doing which I am joined by Mrs. Washington and Miss Custis. I have the honour etc.

***To WILLIAM HAMBLY³⁸**

Mount Vernon, July 28, 1798.

Sir: Bearing in grateful remembrance the very fine Cheeses, you had the goodness to send me, Mrs. Washington prays your acceptance of half a dozen Hams of her own curing.³⁹ I am etc.

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, July 29, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 9th. Ult. (to which I replied on the 17th following) is the last I have received from you. And nothing more have I heard of the Pictures from Mr. Savage and the last Vole. of the Encyclœdia which you say you were then about to Ship in a Vessel loading for Alexandria.

For my sentiments respecting the old Coach and Table Ornaments I refer to my last of the above date 17th June, and repeat my request of a picture frame of the quality and size therein mentioned. With esteem etc.

38. Of Falmouth, England.

39. Washington wrote (July 28) to Thompson & Veitch, of Alexandria, Va., the text of which letter is not now found in the *Washington Papers*; but may be judged from their reply (July 30): "We are favoured with yours of the 28th Instant and have warded the Hams pr ship *Suffolk* (that sailed this day)...We with pleasure accept your friendly invitation to a family

Library of Congress

dinner, and shall soon make it convenient to do ourselves the Honour of waiting on you at Mount Vernon." This letter is in the *Washington Papers*.

***To JUDGE ALEXANDER ADDISON**

Mount Vernon, July 29, 1798.

Sir: Your favour of the 11th. Instant, dated in Philadelphia, has been received; accompanied by one from Colo. Pickering, advising me of his having received, from you, on my A/c, the Sum of Seventeen hundred dollars as part of the Installment due the 1st. of June last, on the deceased Colonel Matthew Ritchie's Bond.

For want of the Bond, which was deposited in the Bank of Pennsylvania, at Colo. Ritchie's request, I am at a loss to understand the meaning of your question, and statement. "The amt. of the payment due on 1st of June last is Dollrs. 3292.80 of which 352.80 is interest; will the Interested [*sic*] be calculated on 3292.80 or on 2940?" If the Bond had been complied with, and the Instalment of \$3292.80 had been paid at the time it became due no question could have arisen. If then I rightly comprehend the meaning of it, it can hardly be expected that, besides sustaining the inconvenience of a disappointment of the receipt, that I should feel an injury also in the payment, occasioned by that delay. Had I received \$3292.80 on the 1st day of June agreeably to the tenor of the Bond, that sum might, and would have been actively employed in *stopping* interest, or vesting it so as to have *produced* it. In this light I persuade myself the matter will strike you, and when I add, which I can do with truth, that the non-reception of the above Sum, and an Instalment due on Colo. Shreves Bond for a similar purpose, and due at the sametime, has been attended with a serious disappointment, your

doubts will be removed and the full sum be paid so soon as you are enabled.

Amicable decisions are, in my opinion, always to be preferred to litigious contentions; but I little expected after it was agreed to *fix the price* of the Land by a re-survey of its contents,

Library of Congress

and that, that resurvey probably was made with knowledge, if not in the presence, of Mr. James Reed, that I should ever be called upon for a deduction of it thereafter. If I have a right understanding of the matter, it is of little moment what Mr. Reeds Patent says if the words of mine are opposed to it, for I am much mistaken indeed if my Survey was not made, and Patent granted *long* before any others on Millers run. And I have perfect recollection of the fact (when I examined the land myself in Autumn of 1784) but not of the persons name, who I was told was then extending his clearings on my side of the line. More than probable, Read is the Man, and being in possession, claims it as a Right.

As all the Papers relative to this land have been transfered to Colo. Ritchie; As all of them passed through the hands of the Honble. Mr Ross who drew the writings; and was well acquainted with the understanding of the parties at the time, acting the part of a mutual friend to both. I am willing if he should think I ought to have any further concern in disputes arising after the price was fixed in the manner aforesaid, that he on my behalf and you (shewing him this letter) should agree on the most speedy, and equitable mode of

adjusting that which exists with Mr. James Reed. I pray you to excuse this scrawl, as I write in much haste. I am etc.

***To RICHARD CLOUGH ANDERSON**

Mount Vernon, July 30, 1798.

Sir: In the course of last Winter A Mr. Massay passed through Alexandria on his way to Philadelphia, and reported at the former place, that I should *lose my land* in the North Western Territory, on the little Miami.

Not perceiving how this could happen, *fairly* and not supposing that it would be taken from me otherwise, without allowing me a hearing; I paid but little attention to the Report until Mr. George Graham called upon me the other day, and in conversing on this subject gave

Library of Congress

it as his opinion that, the land was in real jeopardy by re-entry under some error in the former proceedings, and advised me to write to you relatively thereto.

This I now do, under full conviction however, that as the former Surveys were made under your Auspices; examined and recorded in your Office; and Patents granted thereupon in the year 1790 with the following recital "In consideration of a Military warrant of 3000 Acres granted to John Roots by Lord Dunmore the 7th December 1770 and assigned by the said Rootes unto George Washington Esqr the 14th. February 1774 and exchanged by a Resolution of General Assembly passed 30th Decr.

1784 for a Warrant of 3000 Acres No. 3753 and dated the 14th. Feby. 1785." I say, under full conviction that you would not suffer the land to be wrested from me by any Subsequent transaction in your Office, without giving me notice thereof in time to assert my prior claim, I now give you the trouble of this Address; adding at the sametime that if any thing is necessary on my part to give more validity or greater legality to former proceedings, I am willing to encounter the expence, rather than enter into a tedious and expensive Chancery suit, which I assuredly will do before my property shall be taken from me.⁴²

I would thank you Sir, for full information, and your advice relative to this matter, as soon as it is convenient.⁴³ Being Your etc.

***To TOBIAS LEAR**

Mount Vernon, August 2, 1798.

Dear Sir: I was glad to hear by Charles that you were much better than when we saw you last. If you have missed the Ague, care, and Bark,⁴⁸ is necessary to prevent a return, and this prudence requires.

Monday next being the day fixed on by the Constitution of the Potomac Company for its annual meeting, and as you seem resolved to relinquish your present Office of President, I

Library of Congress

wish you would turn your thoughts attentively to the situation of it, and resolve seriously on characters fit and proper

42. The difficulty arose from the Virginia cession of her western lands to the United States, which changed the method of establishing titles of private ownership. Washington had complied with all the regulations of the Virginia land recording laws; but seems not to have noticed the necessity of reentry, or transfer of record, with the United States. The land formed a portion of Washington's estate and was mentioned in the inventory accompanying his will. In 1806 Joseph Kerr then deputy surveyor of the Virginia military district of Ohio and later United States Senator from that State, deliberately took advantage of the technicalities of the law and filed on this Washington land. The subsequent suits and legal disputes and claims continued down to 1909. A full account of the matter by E. O. Randall is published in the *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly*, vol. 19 (1910), pp. 304–19. (See also Prussing's *Estate of George Washington, Deceased*.)

43. Anderson was fully persuaded that Washington's title was clear and unassailable, as his reply to this letter (of September 5, in the *Washington Papers*) shows.

48. Quinine, which was often called “Jesuit's bark.”

to supply the place of those who perhaps ought to, as well as those who will quit, the Director ship; that our struggles in that interesting and expence concert [*sic*], the labour of years, may not end in disgrace and loss.

The little leisure I had *before* my late appointment (from Visits, my necessary rides, and other occurrences) to overhaul, arrange, and separate papers of real, from those of little or no value, is now, by that event, so much encroached upon by personal and written applications for Offices, and other matters incidental to the Situation of the Commander in Chief that without assistance I must abandon all idea of accomplishing this necessary work, before I embark in New Scenes, which will render them more voluminous and of

Library of Congress

course more difficult. A measure which would be extremely irksome to me, to submit to, especially as it respects my A/cts. which are yet in a jumble. My earnest wish and desire being, when I quit the stage of human action, to leave *all matters* in such a situation as to give as little trouble as possible to those who will have the management of them thereafter.

Under this view of my situation, which is far from being an agreeable one; and at times fill me with deep concern, when I perceive so little prospect of a complete extrication. I have written to the Secretary of War to be informed whether (as my taking the Field is contingent, and no pay or emolument will accrue to myself until then) I am at liberty to appoint my Secretary immediately; who shall be allowed his pay and Forage from the moment he joins me. If he answers in the affirmative, *on those terms*, can you do this?

Have you heard from the Master

of the Academy at Charlestown? At any rate, my opinion is, that you had better, with the least possible delay, get the boys fixed *permanently* at some good school. They will, otherwise, lose precious moments. Let me hear from you. I am, in haste, but always Your Affecte.

***To JOSIAH DUNHAM⁵²**

Mount Vernon, August 4, 1798.

Sir: Your favor of the 13th. Ult^o. accompanying the Oration delivered by you on the Anniversary of American Independence, I recd. by the last Post. For both I thank you. The sentiments expressed therein do me much honour. They flatter me highly and cannot fail to make a grateful impression on the sensibility of one who offers you in return his very best wishes and the assurances of being Sir Your etc.

***To THOMAS PETER**

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, August 12, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 9th. was handed to me yesterday, enclosing one from Colo. Deakins, and a Tobacco Note as below, 68 for which I transmit a receipt.

I am ignorant of the principle, on which I am called upon to pay for picking a Tenants tobacco; but presuming it was proper, I thank you for having done it. And I pray you to add to the

52. Hanover, N. H.

68.

Mark No. Gross. Tare Nett.

CM—106585491763

expençe as much Tobacco as will make the Hhd. sufficiently heavy: and to deposit it with the rest in the hands of Mr. Peter, your father, to be disposed of in whatever manner, and on whatever terms, he shall part with his own.

Enclosed is a Post note on the Bank of Columbia for One hundred dollars which I pray you to receive, and after deducting what I owe you, and what may arise in making the Tobacco Note (which is returned) sufficiently heavy, forward the balance, at a convenient time to Dear Sir Your etc.

Mrs. Washington, Nelly and Washington (now at home) are all well and join in love to Patsy, yourself and the Children. Genl. Spotswood and family are here.

***To BUSHROD WASHINGTON**

Mount Vernon, August 12, 1798.

Library of Congress

My dear Sir: I have received your letter of the 7th. instant, giving an extract of Mr. Nicholas's letter to you. With respect to the request contained int it,⁷⁰ I leave the matter *entirely* to his own *discretion* , with your advise, to advance or halt, according to the tenableness of his ground, and circumstances.

If he could prove, indubitably, that the letter addressed to me, with the signature of *Jno. Langhorne* , was a forgery, no doubt would remain in the mind of any one that it was written with a view to effect some nefarious purpose. and if the person he suspects, is the *real* Author or abetter, it

69. Washington wrote this “de.”

70. Sparks states that this was “A request to publish a statement of the affair respecting the fictitious John Langhorne;” but Bushrod Washington's letter of Aug. 7, 1798, is not now found in the *Washington Papers*. Sparks does not print the latter portion of the above letter to Bushrod Washington which begins: “If a *trick* so dirty etc.”

would be a pity not to expose him to Public execration; for attempting, in so dishonorable a way, to obtain a disclosure of Sentiments of which some advantage could be taken. But Mr. Nicholas will unquestionably know, that if the proofs fail, the matter will recoil, and that the statement must be *full* , and not a partial one that is given to the Public; not only as the most satisfactory mode of bringing it before that tribunal, but shortest in the result: for he will have a persevering phalanx to contend against.

It seems to me that he would be obligd to disclose the *manner* , in which his correspondence and mine began, and the *motives* wch. led to it; for until the discovery was made, and communicated by him to me, that *Jno. Langhorne* was a fictitious name, I had not the smallest suspicion thereof; but, on the contrary, viewed the production as that of a Pedagogue, who was desirous of exhibiting a few of his flowers. and after returning a civil, but short answer, I never thought more of him, or his letter, until the history of the

Library of Congress

business was developed by Mr. Nicholas. All this must appear; or contrivance would be retorted. I will only add that, as Mr. Nicholas has made you a confidant in this business, I shall acquiesce with pleasure in any steps he may take, that will bring me forward, with your concurrence. If a *trick* so dirty and shabby as this is supposed to be, could be *clearly proved*, it would, in my opinion, be attended with a happy effect at this time; but, on the other hand, if it should be attempted and fail, the reverse would be the consequence.

I little thought when I retired to the Shades of Private life, last year, that any event would happen, *in my day*, that could bring me again, on the Public theatre; but so it is; and the remnant of a life which required ease and tranquillity, will end more than probably in

toil and responsibility.

Your Mother left us on friday; for your Brother Corbins, after giving us the pleasure of her's, and Nancy Washington's Company, eight or ten days. Corbins wife is much better, and hopes axe entertained of her being perfectly restored.

Your Aunt and the family unite with me in best wishes for yourself and Mrs. Washington; and I am etc.⁷¹

***To REVEREND JONATHAN BOUCHER**

Mount Vernon, August 15, 1798.

Revd. Sir: I know not how it has happened, but the fact is, that your favour of the 8th. of Novr, last year, is but just received; and at a time when both public and private business pressed so hard upon me, as to afford no leisure to give the "View of the causes and consequences of the American Revolution" written by you, and which you had been pleased to send me, a perusal.

Library of Congress

For the honor of its Dedication, and for the friendly and favourable sentiments which are therein expressed, I pray you to accept my acknowledgment and thanks.

Not having read the Book, it follows of course that I can express no opinion with respect to its Political contents; but I can venture to assert, beforehand, and with confidence, that there is no man, in either country, more zealously devoted to Peace, and a good understanding between the two Nations than I am, nor one who is more disposed to bury

71. From a photostat of the original through the kindness of Judge E. A. Armstrong, of Princeton, N.J.

in oblivion all animosities which have subsisted between them, and the Individuals of each.

Peace, with all the world is my sincere wish. I am sure it is our true policy. and am persuaded it is the Ardent desire of the Government. But there is a Nation whose intermeddling, and restless disposition; and attempts to divide, distract and influence the measures of other Countries, that will not suffer us, I fear, to enjoy this blessing long, unless we will yield to them our Rights, and submit to greater injuries and insults than we have already sustained, to avoid the calamities resulting from War.

What will be the consequences of our Arming for self defence, that Providence, who permits these doings in the Disturbers of Mankind; and who rules and Governs all things, alone can tell. To its all powerful decrees we must submit, whilst we hope that the justice of our Cause if War, must ensue. will entitle us to its Protection. With very great respect etc.

***To HENRY GIRD, JUNIOR⁷²**

Mount Vernon, August 19, 1798.

Library of Congress

Sir: Having had time to reflect more at leisure on the application made to me yesterday by you and your brother, for a tract of land of which I am possessed in the Ohio, containing by the patent two thousand four hundred and forty eight Acs. I have

72. Publisher of *The Columbian Mirror and Alexandria Gazette*.

determined to offer it to your father on the following terms. viz.

First. At ten dollars an Acre, provided it has nothing more than its situation, and the quality of its soil to recommend it.

Second. If more than these appertain, for instance a valuable Mill Seat; Ores of any kind, &ca. these shall be valued by disinterested men chosen by the parties, and be added to the above value, or

Third. If to avoid this trouble and uncertainty Mr. Gird would prefer a definite sum, I will (although it might be disadvantageous to me, and notwithstanding the price fixed thereon yesterday) take One thousand dollars in addition to the ten dollars an Acre.

Fourth. The Land shall be granted on a lease for Seven years, paying an Interest annually, and punctually, of Six per Centum pr. Annum durg that term, the first of which to become due on the first of January in the year Eighteen hundred, and the same sum, on the same day, in every year thereafter during the above red. term of seven yrs.

Fifth. It shall be optional in the said Gird, to be possessed of the said tract of Land in Fee simple, on conditions that he shall pay the whole sum of ten dollars an Acre, and the thousand dollars as before mentioned, within the said term of Seven years; but not in less sums than five thousand dollars at a payment.

Sixth. That upon the receipt of such payment, and every of them, the next annual payment thereafter, of Interest, shall be on the Balance of the principal Sum.

Library of Congress

Seventh. Proper Instruments of writing may be drawn by a skilful professional man, to carry the true intent and meaning of the parties into effect.

Eighth. The regular payment of interest on the principal sum, until discharged, must be so secured as to give me no trouble in the collection. I mean upon whatever Balance shall be due, if payments are made.

If Mr. Gird is disposed to bargain on these terms,

which I conceive are very favourable for him, the matter may be closed as soon as he pleases, and the sooner the better, as other offers are made to Sir Your etc.

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, August 13, 1798.

Dear Sir: Since my last to you I have received your letter of the 31st. Ult. enclosing a Statement of the A/c. betwn us, and have also received the Pictures and Books in good order.

When I sent Doctr. Bartons Note to you, I accompanied it with information, that there was no other way of dealing with him than to obtain security for payment of the money at a future day, for if I was to bestow the epithet on him which he deserves it would not be a mild one. It is not the value of the money I regard, but to be imposed upon in such away by a man who was an utter stranger to me is somewhat vexatious.

Some money being paid to Colo. Pickering by Judge Addison, for land I sold the deed. Colo. Ritchie, I have requested Two hundred dollers thereof to be delivered to you, in discharge of my balance. I am etc.

***To BUSHROD WASHINGTON**

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, August 27, 1798.

My dear Bushrod: At the time your letter of the 20th. instant (with others) was brought to this place, I was not in a situation to acknowledge the receipt of it; and no Post has happened since, by which I could do it. That of tomorrow, of which I shall avail myself, will be the first which offers.

On the 18th at night, I was seized with a fever, of which I took little notice until the 21st; when I was obliged to call for the aid of Medicine; and with difficulty a remission thereof was so far effected, as to dose me all night on thursday, with Bark: wch, having stoped it, and weakness only remaining, will soon wear off; as my appetite is returning.

I learnt with much pleasure from the P.S. to your letter, of General Marshall's intentions to make me a visit. I wish it of all things. and it is from the ardent desire I have to see him, that I have not delayed a moment to express it; lest, if he should have intended it on his way to Frederick, and hear of my Indisposition, he might change his route.

I can add with sincerity and truth, that if you can make it comport with your business, I should be exceedingly happy to see you along with him.⁷⁶ The Crisis is important. The temper of the People of this State in many (at least in some) places, are so violent and outrageous, that I wish to converse with Genl Marshall and yourself on the Elections which must soon come.

The fictitious letter of *John Langhorne* may

76. John Marshall and Bushrod Washington visited Mount Vernon on September 3. They attended a public dinner, given by the citizens of Alexandria to John Marshall, September 5, and left Mount Vernon before breakfast, September 6.

be had at any time. I do not send it *now* , beause if you come up it will do *then* ; and we will let Genl Marshall into the whole business and advise with him thereon. for *good* or *evil*

Library of Congress

must flow from Mr. N—ch—s' attempt, according to his establishment of facts: Present my best wishes to Genl Marshall; My love (in which your Aunt unites) to Nancy; and believe me to be always Your Most Affect.

***To JAMES ATHILL⁸¹**

Mount Vernon, September 4, 1798.

Sir: I had the honor to receive by Captn. Evelett, in the Brig Philanthropist, your very polite and obliging favor of the 21st. July, accompanying five Sheep, and a number of exotic Plants: of which the Captain appears to have been carefull, although a number of the latter have died. Those which have survived look lively, and probably will do well, as all possible care shall be taken of them.

This flattering testimony of your polite recollection of the hours I had the honor to spend with you at this place.⁸² is grateful to my feelings; and while I regret that the days you remained here were so few, permit me to add that, if induced by inclination or other motives, you should again re-visit the United States I shall feel happy in an increase of them; and shall always have pleasure in shewing civilities to any Gentn. you may please to introduce personally or by letter.

81. Speaker of the Assembly of Antigua, West Indies.

82. Athill was at Mount Vernon, Nov. 13–16, 1797.

It gave me great pleasure to hear of your safe arrival in Antiqua; and it would have added to it, to have been told that the good health which, in appearance you carried from these United States had continued.

If there be Plants, or other things Sir, the growth or produce of the middle States of which you are desirous, and conceive they would bear the heat of the tropical Sun, I should have much pleasure in furnishing you with them. and although it is a fact well ascertained I

Library of Congress

believe, that the Woolly tribe of Animals change their Coating when ever they are removed to hot Climates, for to a course wool, and then to hair, yet as it may be curious to observe the gradation and time required for this process of nature I have taken the liberty of sending you a Ram and five ewes of the last yeaning, that if you are so disposed, the fact may be established under your own eyes.

Mrs. Washington and Miss Custis are grateful for your kind recollection of them, and pray you to accept their Compliments I have the honor etc.

***To THOMAS PETER**

Mount Vernon, September 4, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of yesterdays date was received last night; and I consent to Ship the 4 Hhds. of Tobacco which I have in the Warehouses at

George Town, and the 2. at Nanjemoy, in Mr. Carltons Ship, and to his friends in London,; supposing them to be good men for they are strangers to me.

I shall rely on him to order Insurance thereon. The freight and Primage seems high, but if it is paid by Messrs. Wilson & Potts I cannot expect it for less, presuming I am not charged more.

I require no advance on the Tobo, but when the proceeds are known, I may draw for it in Goods. I am etc.

***To WILLIAM JONES AND BOARD OF MANAGERS OF THE MARINE AND CITY HOSPITALS⁸⁹**

Mount Vernon, September 10, 1798.

Library of Congress

Gentlemen: Among those who commiserate the afflicted Citizens of Philadelphia, I beg you to be persuaded that none do it with more sincerity, or with more feeling than I do. And the poignancy is very much increased by the declaration of the malignancy of the fever,90 and difficulty of cure.

That I may contribute my mite towards the relief of the suffering and unfortunate poor of that place, I enclose two Post notes of one hundred dollars each. You will be so good as to inform me by a line of their getting to hand, which is all the notice I wish to be taken of the donation. I am etc.

89. Of Philadelphia, Pa.

90. Yellow fever.

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, September 10, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 11th. Ult. was received in the usual course of the Post. That the City of Phila. should again be visited by that dreadful malignant fever which has made such impressions upon it heretofore, is matter of sore regret and that it should baffle more and more the skill of the Physicians adds poignancy to the misfortune.

The only intention of giving you the trouble to receive a letter from me at this time is to request that the one which accompanies it may be safely delivered to the President of the Board of Managers. with esteem etc.

***To ALEXANDER WHITE**

Mount Vernon, September 12, 1798.

Library of Congress

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 8th. instant, with a plan of the Squares in the vicinity of the Capital, came to me on the 10th; and for the trouble you have been at in designating such lots as you think would answer my purpose, I feel much obliged.

From what you have said, and from the recollection I have of the ground, I give a decided preference to lot No 16 in square 634;⁹¹ but the price I fear (upwards of \$1200) will sink too deep into the fund which must be appropriated to the buildings; and therefore, if the

⁹¹. This was the site on which Washington's two houses were erected. It was near the middle of the square, on the west side of North Capitol Street, between B and C Streets. A bronze tablet now marks the location in the Capitol Grounds.

following queries respecting lot No. 2 in square 731⁹² are satisfactorily answered, I must content myself with that; as it is not with a view to accumulate property in the City, but merely to contribute a mite to the accomodation of Congress, that I purchase at all.

facts I wish to ascertain are.

1. Is the high part of No. 2 in square 731 upon a level with the ground on which the road runs from the Capital to the upper ferry, over the E. Branch?
 2. Is there any higher ground between it and the Eastern B: to obstruct the view thereof?
and
 3. is there much fall between the East and West corner of the on Pennsylvania Avenue?
- Answers to these questions will enable me to chuse, without further delay.

As I never require much time to execute any measure after I have resolved upon it; if an Undertaker could be engaged in ye City, or its vicinity, to dig the Cellars and lay the foundation; and the Commissioners would do me the favour to enter into a contract therefor, to the basement story, I could wish it to be set about and executed this fall

Library of Congress

(and the earlier the better). Any engagement they shall enter into on my behalf, shall be most religiously complied with. If an advance of money to carry on the work is required, it may be engaged; and as two houses joined and carried on together, will look better, and come cheaper than building them separately or at different times, I have determined to commence two, and if I can procure the means, complete both in the course of next summer.

92. This lot was in the middle of the square bounded by Pennsylvania Avenue, B, 1st and 2d Streets, S. E. The Library of Congress now occupies this site.

I am not skilled. in Architecture, and perhaps know as little of planning, but as the houses I mean to build will be plain, and (if placed on lot 16 in sqr. 634) will be adopted to the front of the lot leaving Allies or entries to the back buildings, I enclose a sketch, to convey my ideas of the size of the houses, rooms, and manner of building them; to enable you to enter into the Contract.

This sketch exhibits a view of the ground floor; the second, and third, if the walls should be run up three flush stories will be the same, and the Cellars may have a partition in them at the Chimnies. My plan when it comes to be examined may be radically wrong, if so, I persuade myself that Doctr. Thornton, (who understanding these matters well) will have the goodness to suggest alterations.

I shall make no apology for soliciting this favor of the Commissioners. To promote buildings is desirable; and is an object under present circumstances, of the first importance to the City. If then they can comply it conveniently, I persuade myself they will do so, but if they cannot it would be unreasonable in me to ask it, and I wave the request accordingly. With very great esteem etc.93

93. From *District of Columbia Letters and Papers* in the Library of Congress.

***To ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD**

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, September 14, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 11th. came to my hands yesterday. Two causes, indeed three, prevented my answering the first, after your return to New Post sooner; namely, debilitated health, occasioned by the fever, wch. deprived me of 20 lbs of the weight I had, when you and I were at my Mill Scales, and rendered writing irksome; the expectation of hearing from you again, relative to the Carpenter and Farmer, to whom you informed me, you had written; and the daily expectation of hearing from Rawlins, who had been informed that if he could forward satisfactory recommendations of his qualifications, to make a good Overseer, that he would be employed by me in that character. These reasons must apologize for your not hearing from me sooner.

By the same Mail that brought me your letter of the 11th. Rawlins sent me satisfactory testimonials of his fitness for my purpose, of course I stand engaged to him; but I have yet one place certain, perhaps two, requiring Overseers: but not at the advanced wages your Overseer asks, viz £50, &c. These are my home house, which requires an active, stirring, and spirited man; but not an ill-tempered or severe one. The other, in which I have been in some doubt, is what I call Dogue run Farm (where the Octagon Barn and treading floor is). I could not well afford more than £40, and the usual allowance of Provisions for the latter; and £35 is the most I ever gave for the former, and seldom more than £30. A single man would suit the home house best, would be cheaper to

me, and he himself would live much better, in as much as he would eat of the Provisions that went from my table with the Housekeeper and other hired people about it: on the other hand, a married man would be preferred for Dogue run.

The reason why I doubted about employing an Overseer at the latter Farm, is, that as Union and Dogue run Farms are under one Overseer this year, and the latter conducted in a great measure by the foreman, I had some thoughts of entrusting it solely to him next year, under the direction of the Steward, but when I perceive but too clearly that Negroes

Library of Congress

are growing more and more insolent and difficult to govern, I am more inclined to incur the expense of an Overseer than to hazard the management, and peace of the place to a Negro; provided I can get a good Overseer on moderate terms: and why *any of them* should think of an *increase* of wages when the produce by which they are to be paid is reduced to half price, and taxes to their Employer (wch. they will not feel) are becoming very high, is to me inconceivable, for these causes I am *lowering* the wages of my Farms.

I mention these things to possess you of my ideas relative to these matters, but will add, notwithstanding, that I will keep one of the two places before mentioned open until you hear from Richard Rhodes, and learn his terms, if he will come to me at all. I think he would have a better opportunity of displaying his Knowledge and skill as a farmer at Dogue run (which is really a good Farm) than at the Mansion, where there

is nothing done by the hands that are kept there but jobbing, and running from one thing and from one place to another; and for overlooking this Farm, I would stretch the wages to £45. though I should hope to get him for £40. And if he declines coming altogether, or asks higher wages, I will, in that case, offer the same lay, for the same place, to your Overseer. But if Rhodes accepts, and your Overseer will come to the Mansion house for £40 (which is ten pounds more than I had intended) I will allow him that sum, which I am persuaded would be better and more profitable to him (if a single man, as I understood from you he was) than £50 at a separate farm, where he would have to find himself many small, though expensive articles from which he would be exempt by eating at my second Table with the Housekeeper.

So much for your Overseer and Rhodes, I must add however, that both must decide immediately: Yea or Nay, of which you will be so good as to inform me without delay, as others are offering (said to be good) which I may also miss, the season getting late for valuable Overseers to be disengaged.

Library of Congress

From the character you have received of Brookes (the Carpenter) I have no hesitation in requesting that he may be engaged immediately, and I did not care how soon he would come up; for as he is spoken of as a complete Joiner, I have work enough for him in *that* way before the time of the present Overlooker of my Carpenters expires; which will be about the first of November. I go, in this case, upon

the supposition that Brookes is a single man. If on the contrary he is a married one his wife cannot be brought here (altho' he might come himself immediately) until my other Carpenter moves his family away, and the house in which they live, is given up. If he is single, he wd. not live in that but in one of the houses in my Yard, and eat, as before mentioned, with the Housekeeper and others.

You will oblige me very much by having *all these matters* adjusted as soon as possible, and by informing me of the result; that I may be placed upon a certainty, and conduct myself accordingly. As it will not be in my power to hold those, who offer here, in suspense more than a few days longer.

You forgot to leave me the names and grades of those Officers whose celebrity were Known in the Revolutionary War; and by expecting it, I did not charge my memory with them, and have forgot the names of those you did mention.

I have had no return of my fever, and am recovering my flesh fast, nearly a pound, and a half a day; at which rate if I should hold it for a twelve month I shall be an overmatch for Major Willis.⁹⁷

We were very glad to hear that you got safe home in the extreme hot weather you travelled from hence.

Mrs. Washington, Nelly and Washington Custis are all well, and unite in best regards and wishes for your self, Mrs. Spotswood, and the family, with Dear Sir, &c.

Library of Congress

PS. To insure this letter's getting to you without any delay at the Post Office, I have requested Mr. Parks to send it to you by Express.

97. Francis(?) Willis.

***To REVEREND G. W. SNYDER⁷**

Mount Vernon, September 25, 1798.

Sir: Many apologies are due to you, for my not acknowledging the receipt of your obliging favour of the 22d. Ultò, and for not thanking you, at an earlier period, for the Book⁸ you had the goodness to send me.

I have heard much of the nefarious, and dangerous plan, and doctrines of the Illuminati, but never saw the Book until you were pleased to send it to me.⁹ The same causes which have prevented my acknowledging the receipt of your letter have prevented my reading the Book, hitherto; namely, the multiplicity of matters which pressed upon me before, and the debilitated state in which I was left after, a severe fever had been removed. And which allows me to add little more now, than thanks for your kind wishes and favourable sentiments, except to correct an error you have run into, of my Presiding over the English lodges in this Country. The fact is, I preside over none, nor have I been in one more than once or twice, within the last thirty years. I believe notwithstanding, that none of the Lodges in *this* Country are contaminated with the principles ascribed to the Society of the Illuminati. With respect I am &c.

***To WILLIAM RUSSELL¹⁶**

Mount Vernon, September 28, 1798.

Sir: Your favour of the 8th instr. is received, and I thank you for your obliging attention to the articles promised me, when I had the pleasure of seeing you at this place.

Library of Congress

7. Of Fredericktown (now Frederick), Md.

8. *Proofs of a Conspiracy &c*, by John Robison.

9. In a letter from Snyder (Aug. 22, 1798, which is in the *Washington Papers*), it is stated that this book “gives a full Account of a Society of Free-Masons, that distinguishes itself by the Name of ‘Illuminati,’ whose Plan is to overturn all Government and all Religion, even natural.”

16. Of Middletown, Conn.

I will direct twenty of my best ewes to be reserved for the Ram you have kindly promised me; which, with the Chaff machine, I shall look for when an opportunity will allow you to send them.

The cause which has prevented their shipment, is very afflicting to humanity, and must be sorely felt by the City of New York, and other places under the same calamitous circumstances.

I have sent to the care of Mr. Thomas Porter of Alexandria, fifteen bushels of fine forward wheat, in five flour barrels, agreeably to your desire. Having none of my own growth that was pure and unmixed, I purchased this quantity from a neighbour of mine who raises no other kind, and am assured it is genuine.

I feel very much obliged, Sir, by your present of the Ram, and further kind intentions; for the trouble you have taken to procure the Chaff machine for me; and not less for your kind wishes, which I reciprocate with great cordiality being Sir Your etc.

To THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mount Vernon, September 28, 1798.

Library of Congress

Gentlemen: Your favour of yesterday's date is received. and enclosed are checks on the Bank of Alexandria for \$428.40 amount of payment for the lot had of Mr. D. Carroll;¹⁷ which you will please to deliver when the Conveyance is received; and \$178.57 being the third of \$535.70 to be paid for lot No. 16 in square 634 purchased from you.

17. Daniel Carroll, of "Duddington."

I feel very much obliged by the trouble you have taken in this business; and you will add considerably to the obligation, by examining Mr. Blagdins¹⁸ estimate accurately, to prevent any imposition upon me: your knowledge of prices, and perfect acquaintance in matters of this kind, will enable you to form a correct judgment of the component parts, as well as the aggregate amount of the proposed buildings, whereas my unacquaintedness in the present price of materials, Workmen's wages, &ca. &ca. might subject me (if the Undertaker was so disposed) to great imposition. I am willing to pay the full value, according to the Plan, and will sign any agreement you shall approve; relying infinitely more on your judgment in this business, than on any skill I have in it.

There is a matter I often intended to mention to the Commissioners of the City, but have always forgot to do it, when I was at their Board. Eventually it may be interesting to me, and I shall therefore do it now, as it has again occurred.

When I purchased lots No. 5. 12. 13. and 14, in square 66719 (at public sale), it was declared at the time, and I have the Surveyors sketch (without any signature however) shewing it, that they were (that is No. 12. 13. and 14) water lots. There is a street between them and the Eastern branch; and if *any*, not more than a slipe of the bank between the Street and the water. On the strength of this declaration I purchased, and paid pretty smartly for the lots; but in the evidence (received from the former Commissioners) of this purchase, nothing therein contained gives assurance of this fact, and hereafter it may become a disputable point, very much to my injury.

Library of Congress

18. George Blagdin (Blagden). He was the builder of the two houses Washington erected on North Capitol Street.

19. Square 667 is bounded by Water, V, W, and First Streets SW.

I have troubled you with this statement, accompanied with the Surveyors sketch (to be returned) that you may be enabled to point out the measures necessary to be taken, for my surety, in this case. Indeed, it appears to me that my title to *all* the lots I have purchased from the *Public* is incomplete; having no more than certificates thereof; when, on my part the conditions have been fully complied with. With very great esteem etc.

[H.S.P.]

***To MAJOR GENERAL HENRY LEE**

Mount Vernon, September 29, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of yesterday's date from George Town is received.

You know perfectly well what my inducements were to part with the property you purchased of me, but rather than have any difficulty, or unpleasant disputes respecting the payments, agreeable to contract, I would take productive property in the Federal City, in Alexandria, or almost any where, or any thing productive, or unproductive, at what it would fetch in the market; provided the title is indisputable; but I protest decidedly against receiving *any* where their is the smallest pretensions of others.

As to the *present* being an unfavourable time to dispose of property in the City, or elsewhere, permit me to observe that, it is a question of very equivocal solution. The rise or fall, depends upon events, which, under present circumstances, few among us are able to penetrate, or foretell the issue. But all

Library of Congress

this is matter of opinion or speculation, and but little to the purpose.

Point out, if you please, the precise property; the precise situation of it; and, if absolutely free from any incumbrance or disputes. This will enable me to determine, at once, if there be a probability of accommodating matters in the way you propose. It is necessary I should inform you, that I have tried every expedient in my power, to obtain payment of Jesse Simms's note, but, as yet, without effect, and that, by looking to my letter of the 8th. of Sepr. Last year, you will perceive that credit was only to be given when paid.

With respect to Corn, I have partly contracted with my Nephew, Colo. Wm. Washington of Westmoreland, for an annual supply of 500 Barls.

I hope nothing will occasion your leaving these parts without my seeing you. I want much to do it on account of some military concerns, and the sooner it can be made to suit your convenience the more agreeable it would be to me. But for the daily expectation I have been in of this pleasure, I should long since have written to you on this subject. With great esteem etc.

***To ISRAEL SHREVE**

Mount Vernon, October 1, 1798.

Sir: I have waited four months to see if, in that time, you would discharge the Instalment of your judgment Bond, due the first of June last. and am determined to wait no longer than the proceedings in a regular course will compel me to do: for which reason I give you notice that by this days Post I have requested Mr. Ross to obtain from the Bank of Pennsylvania (where it was deposited for collection) your judgment Bond and put it in suit without further delay.

I think myself extremely ill used by your Conduct in this business. You know that it was in order to raise money I sold the land. You have sold a part at nearly the double of what you

Library of Congress

was to have given me; and yet I have been trifled by you more than by any person I have had to deal with.

My own want of money, to fulfil engagements, is such that I inform you before hand, that any application for further indulgence will be unavailing, and need not be attempted. And further, that henceforward, if the Instalments are not paid at the times they become due, the bond will be enforced without any questions being asked. I am etc.

***To THE PRESIDENT AND DIRECTORS OF THE BANK OF PENNSYLVANIA**

Mount Vernon, October 1, 1798.

Gentlemen: Be pleased to deliver to the Honble. James Ross, or his order, the Judgment Bond of Israel Shreve to me. Deposited in the Bank of Pennsylvania for Collection, that the same may be put in suit for recovery of the Instalment due the first of June last. With respect I am etc.

***To JAMES ROSS**

Mount Vernon, October 1, 1798.

Dear Sir: You will perceive by the enclosed letters, left open for your perusal, the delinquency of Colo. Shreve, and my determination to enforce payment of the Instalment of his judgment Bond, the 1st. of June last.

Whether, as the Bond was deposited in the Bank of Pennsylvania for collection, it rests with me to draw it from thence for the purpose of putting it in suit, or for them to order it, your better judgment, and knowledge of the practice, will decide, and you will act accordingly.

Library of Congress

My object is to enforce paymt. as soon as the usual course of things will admit. 1st. because I am in real want of the money, and 2d. because I believe there is not other certain dependence to obtain it, for Shreve, from first to last has done

little else but trifle, both with himself and me. With very sincere esteem etc.

***To WILLIAM AUGUSTINE WASHINGTON**

Mount Vernon, October 3, 1798.

My dear Sir: Your letter of the 27th. of July has remained unacknowledged 'till now, that I embrace the opportunity afforded by General Lee's return, to do it.

To a person not in the habit of sending regularly to the Post Office, nearest to them, it is almost useless to write by the Mail; and with very few exceptions, addressing letters by private hands, is almost as bad, very few people paying much attention to them; which, with the shifting of hands, rubbing in the pocket, and sometimes idle curiosity to know the contents, are great lets to a safe conveyance, in that way.

With respect to the proposed contract for Corn, as my primary object is to be *certain* of getting it, I will agree to divide the freight from your landing to mine (at this place) equally with you; although it would make the Corn come all the higher to me; as neither land, or water transportation, would be more to my Mill (where it will be chiefly wanted) than it would be to the Warehouses, or Wharves in Alexandria. March being a windy month, often cold and disagreeable, about the middle of April would be better, and I would agree to receive it at that time. If with these alterations, from the proposals contained in my letter of the 26th. of June last,

you incline to enter into a contract upon the terms therein mentioned, for five hundred Barrels of Corn, annually, I am ready to close the contract, to be binding for, and during our lives.

Library of Congress

Your answer to this point would be agreeable, as Genl. Lee is desirous of entering into a contract with me for the same quantity of Corn (500 Barls.), and, on A/c. of the payments, it would be very convenient for me to make it; but from the uncertainty of its fulfilment on his part, I feel no disposition to enter into one with him.

I thank you for the old documents you sent me, respecting the family of our Ancestors. but I am possessed of Papers which prove beyond a doubt, that of the two brothers who Emigrated to this Country in the year 1657, during the troubles of that day, that John Washington, from whom we are descended, was the eldest. The Pedigree from him, I have, and I believe very correct; but the descendants of Lawrence, in a regular course, I have not been able to trace. All those of our name, in and about Chotanck, are from the latter. John, was the Grandfather of my father and Uncle, and Great grand father to Warner and me. He left two Sons, Lawrence and John; the former, who was the eldest, was the father of my father, Uncle and Aunt Willis. Mrs. Hayward²⁵ must have been a daughter of the *first* Lawrence, and thence became the Cousen of the second Lawrence, and John. We all unite in best wishes for you and family, and I am etc.

25. Martha Washington. She was the daughter of Lawrence, the rector of Purleigh; emigrated to America and married Samuel Hayward, of Stafford County, Va.; and died in 1697.

***To THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Mount Vernon, October 4, 1798.

Gentlemen: I had the honor to receive your letter of the 3d. instt, last Night.

Mr. Blagdens estimate of the cost of the houses I had proposed to build, far exceeds any aggregate Sum I had contemplated; or think I could command; unless more punctuality was to be found in the fulfilment of Contracts than is, I believe, experienced by any one. Eight, or at most \$10,000, was the extent of my calculation. The house Mr. Law is about

Library of Congress

to build (not much if any less than my two) is undertaken for less than \$6,000 as he informed me. This information, and the report that Materials and workmens wages were low, disposed me to build houses of better appearance than is necessary perhaps for the primary object which induced the measure.

But I will suspend any final decision until I see Mr. Blagdens estimate in detail, with your observations thereupon; and what part of the work I can execute with my own Tradesmen, thereby reducing the advances. I shall only add, that with a high sense of the trouble you have had in this business, and with very great esteem etc.²⁶

26. From *District of Columbia Letters and Papers* in the Library of Congress.

***To WILLIAM HERBERT**

Mount Vernon, October 4, 1798.

Dear Sir: A day or two ago, I received the enclosed letter. Will you be so good as to enable me to answer it.

Observing to you, not long since, that the want of money prevented my doing something (I have forgot now what) you said, if I understood you rightly, that I might be accommodated at the Bank of Alexandria.

I think it not unlikely that in the course of next spring, or summer, if I undertake a measure which is in contemplation, that I shall have occasion for a larger Sum than I see a prospect of receiving from what is due to me. Let me ask then (if I was not mistaken in what you said) what sum you think I could obtain? On what terms? for what time? And what security wd be required? I am etc.

***To REVEREND SAMUEL KNOX³³**

Mount Vernon, October 14, 1798.

Library of Congress

Revd. Sir: Your favour of the 10th. instant has been duly received, and I feel grateful for the honor of your proposed Dedication of an "Uniform System of Education, adapted to the United States" to me.

Had I not declined similar

33. Of Fredericktown (now Frederick), Md.

honors, in all cases where previous applications have been made, I certainly should, with much pleasure, have yielded to one on so important a subject as you have written. But this being the case, I am compelled for the sake of consistency to decline accepting the compliment of yours.

I sincerely wish success to your undertaking and shall, very chearfully, become a subscriber to the Work. With respect I am etc.

***To THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Mount Vernon, October 17, 1798.

Gentlemen: Your favour of the 15th, enclosing Mr. Blagdens statement, relative to my proposed buildings, did not reach my hands until last night.

He has not accompanied this Statement with Specific prices; nor has it altered my opinion of the unreasonableness of the former estimates of some of its parts. But being desirous of closing the matter with Mr. Blagden some way, or other, I make him the following offer, viz:

To take the Painting, Glasing and Iron mongery to myself; and allow him besides, Ten thousand five hundred dollars in full of Commission and every other charge for completing the buildings agreeably to the Specification which he handed to me, and is now in his possession.

Library of Congress

If he will agree to this proposal, the contract may be immediately drawn; and he may proceed in all the preparatory measures as soon as he pleases.

Money shall be furnished for the purpose. and if it would be convenient and advantageous to him, to have the *whole* of the Scantling and Plank provided by a Bill of the same, and he would furnish me therewith, I would immediately order it from the Eastern Shore of Maryland.

On the other hand, if he will not agree to it, I must have recourse to some other mode to accomplish my object. The final answer of Mr. Blagden must be received without delay; as the opportunity of providing materials on good terms may be missed. With great esteem and regard I am etc.⁴³

***To WILLIAM THORNTON**

Mount Vernon, October 18, 1798.

Dear Sir: I regret, not having received your letter of the 16th. until last night. Had it reached me before I wrote to the commissioners yesterday morning by Mr. Thos. Peter, I should have inclined more (although my wish is to have no trouble with the buildings) towards engaging Mr. Blagden's undertaking the Masonry, agreeably to his estimate; doing as much of the wood work *myself*, as my people are competent to, and employing others to do the remainder of it; the Painting, Plastering &ca; to the offer that was made Mr. Blagden, for completing the *whole*; and furnishing every thing as therein expressed (except Painting, Glazing and Iron mongery): and if he boggles at that offer, I must proceed in this manner, to the Execution of the Work; and would be glad to have a contract entered into with him accordingly.

43. From *District of Columbia Letters and Papers* in the Library of Congress.

Library of Congress

If this mode is adopted, I shall expect from Mr. Blagden, and without delay, a compleat Bill of Scantling and Plank; enumerating the quantity and quality; and the length, breadth and thickness of both scantling and Plank, to suit the different parts of the buildings, that I may take measures for obtaining them in the manner you have suggested. The length, width and thickness of the flooring plank ought to be specified; and whether Sap and knots are to be excluded. In short great particularity and exactness must be observed in making out the Bill, that every thing proper and useful may be had, without superfluity or waste. It would be expected of him too, to give the mouldings, and dimensions of such parts of the Work as would be prepared by my own people at *this place* .

It would be quite agreeable to me, that the foundation of the buildings should be laid this Autumn, if the weather will permit. At any rate, I conceive *all* the *foundation* Stone and sand should be carried to the Site. Sure I am, the Carting will be infinitely better before, than after Winter, and workmen I should think easier obtained. The materials must be good whether used in spring or Autumn.

The length of your letter, my good Sir, required no apology. It was kind, and I thank you for the details, as I shall do on similar future occasions. For the haste in which this letter is written I ought to ask your forgiveness. Mr. Law is waiting, and you know he does not wait patiently for any thing not even for dinner. If you can get at my meaning, my object will be ' answered. Complimts. to Mrs. Thornton from this family, and with very great esteem I am etc.⁴⁵

45. From the original in the *William Thornton Papers* in the Library of Congress.

***To THE COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTH CAROLINA SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI⁴⁶**

Mount Vernon, October 20, 1798.

Gentlemen: I have been honored with your favor of the 30th. of August, communicating the Resolve of the Cincinnati Of the State of South Carolina respecting the propriety of

Library of Congress

altering the Ribband to which the badge of the Society was directed by the Constitution, to be appendant, as indicative of the Union between the United States and France; and have transmitted it to the Secretary General, to be laid before the Society at the next General meeting of its Delegates.⁴⁷

With very great esteem etc.

***To RAWLEIGH COLSTON**

Mount Vernon, October 21, 1798.

Sir: It is not more than three or four days since your letter enclosing one from Mr. Thomas Marshall, has been received.

That Gentleman is, as I myself also am, in doubt whether more than one draught has not been made upon me by Colo. Marshall, for the taxes which he has been so kind as to pay for my land in Kentucky. But as the voluminous papers which I brought from Philadelphia are not yet finally adjusted, and I am not in consequence, able to ascertain this fact by an easy reference to them; I shall pay to your order, on demand, the full balance as stated by

46. John F. Grimké, Thomas Pinckney, and Adam Gilchrist.

47. The alteration of the ribbon, which by the constitution of the Cincinnati, was indicative of the union between the United States and France, was proposed because "It was thought that such a distinction was no longer applicable to the relative situation of the two countries and that it became incumbent on us at such a moment to renounce every military Badge or appearance of connection with a nation whose civil and political Union by Treaty had been declared by the Legislative authority of our Country to be void and no longer binding on Us." The committee's letter (Aug. 30, 1798) is in the *Washington Papers*.

Library of Congress

Mr. T. Marshall, viz £17.7.3: leaving the sum of £8.17.3. to be⁴⁹ discounted hereafter, if, upon the assortment of my Papers it shall appear (as I think it will) that it has been paid to some one, authorised by Colo. Marshall to receive it. I am etc.

***To THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

Mount Vernon, October 22, 1798.

Gentlemen: Your favor of the 18th. instt, enclosing a letter from Mr. Blagdin of the same date, came duly to hand, and although I am perfectly satisfied by doing the Carpenters and Joiners work with my own People, by a correct Bill of the materials required, and obtained from a reputable Mill on the Eastern Shore to suit the buildings, that I could save a thousand dollars under that head alone, yet, to avoid trouble to myself, to avoid disputes between workmen, having no controul over, but acting independently of each other; to avoid sending Negro Carpenters to the City, and having them to provide for there; and above all, taking into consideration what may, eventually, happen next year, and my employment in consequence. I have resolved to agree to Mr. Blagdin's terms: that is, to give him Eleven thousand dollars to build the two houses, according to the plan agreed on, and agreeably to the specification which has been presented to me; and must be produced and refered to, as the criterion by which the work is to be judged. I, taking upon myself the execution of the Painting and Glasing; and furnishing the Iron Mongery agreeably to the Bill which he exhibited; the quantity of nails not to over-run the specification; that is, by allowing him

49. Washington wrote this word, inadvertently, as "de."

the amount of *that* item, he is entitled to no further call upon me for an increase.

I have never entered into a contract of this sort, and of course little skilled in drawing one; for which reason, it would be an act of kindness if you would cause efficient articles to be drawn under your Inspection and correction:⁵⁴ the cost of wch. I am willing to pay.

Library of Congress

Whatever is customary on the part of the *Employer* , I am willing to comply with; nothing occurs to me as necessary, at present, except defraying the cost; and this I am ready to do by depositing the means in the Bank of Columbia, to be drawn for by a Gentleman in the City, upon Mr. Blagdin's producing Bills of cost, of the materials for carrying on the Work, and the amount of Workmens wages, every Month, fortnight, or week, as shall be stipulated.

On the part of the *Employed* I presume there are many essentials, requiring him to be bound to the performance of. And is it not necessary, and usual, that these should be secured by Bondsmen?

But I will add no more on a Subject with which you are much better acquainted than I am. I shall be punctual in the fulfillment of my part of the agreement, and only wish to have the counter part equally well observed. For I find, including the price of the Lots and enclosing them, with the cost of the buildings, in the manner I am proceeding, the Rent I shall be able to obtain, will scarcely give me common interest for the money that will be expended. But having put my hand to the work I must not now look back. With very great esteem etc.⁵⁵

54. The "Letter Book" has "direction."

55. From *District of Columbia Letters and Papers* in the Library of Congress.

***To THOMAS MARSHALL, JUNIOR**

Mount Vernon, October 22, 1798.

Sir: Your favor of the 4th. of August came safe to my hands under cover from Mr. Colston, whom I have authorised to draw upon me for the full balance as stated in the a/c transmitted by you.

Library of Congress

It dwells however upon my mind (but not perfectly) that the first item therein, viz, £8.17.3 has been paid to some person who appeared authorised to receive it; but as my voluminous Papers (brought from Philadelphia) are not yet all opened and assorted, I am not able to ascertain this fact, or speak with the least decision on the subject, and therefore have, as before mentioned, desired Mr. Colston to draw upon me, in favor of his correspondent in Alexa, for the whole amount.

If, hereafter, it should be recollected by Colo. Marshall, or appear by any receipt I shall find, that the above sum of £8.17.3 has been paid, it can be allowed in the next account.

I feel much obliged by your kindness in paying the Taxes of my land upon Rough Creek, for the years 1796 and 1797; and for the services you have rendered me in entering them at the Auditors Office for future taxes, agreeably to your late Act of Assembly, relative to Non-residents. and you would add to the obligation by continuing to pay the dues thereon as they arise, and drawing upon me for the amt.

But previous to this, let me request the favour of you to enquire of Mr. Short (if you should see him) whether he has done any thing in this matter, or not; for not having heard for a long time in what Situation, or jeopardy the Land might be, Genl. Spotswood who had business to transact with that Gentleman, and he understood it was

threatened, was requested to ask him to examine, and do what was needful to rescue it, if really in danger, from the threatned evil, which he kindly promised to do. My best wishes and respects are offered to Colo. Marshall. I am etc.

***To THOMAS LAW**

Mount Vernon, October 24, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 17th. instant was handed to me by Mr. Lear, and I should have sent you the enclosed check on the Bank of Alexandria for two hundred and fifty dollars

Library of Congress

sooner, had we not expected you at this place on Friday or Saturday last, according to promise, and been looking for you every day since.

All I ask is, that you would have me secured in the loan of this sum, for the purpose of erecting a Hotel for Mr. Turniciff,⁵⁶ in the same manner you do the \$750 lent on your own A/c.

The family here unite in love and best wishes for Mrs. Law, Eliza and yourself; and I am, with great esteem etc.

***To REVEREND G. W. SNYDER**

Mount Vernon, October 24, 1798.

Revd Sir: I have your favor of the 17th. instant before me; and my only motive to trouble you with the receipt of this letter, is to explain, and correct a mistake which I perceive the hurry in which I am obliged, often, to write letters, have led you into.

56. William Tunnicliff.

On October 24 Washington wrote to Bushrod Washington: "I think you are perfectly right in accepting the appointment of Associate Judge, [of the United States Supreme Court] not only for the reasons you have mentioned but on every other account...The Elections in New Jersey are not favourable, and in Pennsylvania, so far as we have heard, are bad. What these and such like will produce, is left for wiser heads than mine to foretell. I auger very ill of them. I wish your Circuit may be pleasant and honorable to you and that you may return safe to your family and friends. The season is propitious for a Southern tour, and I hope your attention to the duties of your present office will give satisfaction." This extract was printed in a sales catalogue, 1921. Bushrod Washington's letter, to which this is answer, is dated October 19, and is in the *Washington Papers*.

Library of Congress

It was not my intention to doubt that, the Doctrines of the Illuminati, and principles of Jacobinism had not spread in the United States. On the contrary, no one is more truly satisfied of this fact than I am.

The idea that I meant to convey, was, that I did not believe that the *Lodges* of Free Masons in *this* Country had, as *Societies*, endeavoured to propagate the diabolical tenets of the first, or pernicious principles of the latter (if they are susceptible of separation). That Individuals of them may have done it, or that the *founder*, or *instrument* employed to found, the Democratic Societies in the United States, may have had these objects; and actually had a separation of the *People* from their *Government* in view, is too evident to be questioned.

My occupations are such, that but little leisure is allowed me to read News Papers, or Books of any kind; the reading of letters, and preparing answers, absorb much of my time. With respect, etc.

To THE COMMISSIONERS OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mount Vernon, October 27, 1798.

Gentlemen: When Mr. Blagden came here yesterday with your favor of the 25 inst, and the plans, specification &c. of my houses I was out on my usual ride about my farms, and when I returned home, I found Company, which prevented my answering your letter by him.

The sketch of an agreement enclosed in your

letter, comports fully with my ideas.⁵⁷ I have made one or two trifling alterations in it in consequence of some conversation with Mr. Blagden, and I now take the liberty to enclose two Copies of the Agreement and an additional Copy of the specifications. The agreements are drawn in unstamped paper; but I presume it may be stamped in

Library of Congress

George Town. If it cannot be done there, Doctr Thornton will be so good as to have new agreements drawn for me on stamped paper.

I pray you, Gentlemen, to accept my best thanks for the trouble you have had in this business, which I assure you I should not have given, had I not been induced to build these houses more with a view to promote the necessary improvements in the City, than for any expectation of private emolument from them. With great respect etc.⁵⁸

***To RICHARD BLAND LEE**

Mount Vernon, October 27, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 18th. Inst: has been duly received.

Your application for an appointment in the Provisional Army (if one should be necessary) required no explanation. The application, and the manner in which it was made, do honor to you as a Citizen and Patriot; and affords a pleasing specimen of what may be expected from the lovers of order, good government and the rights of their Country, if either should be invaded. I can assure you that, to see your name on the list of Candidates, afforded me pleasure; and the sentiments with which it was accompanied, were praise worthy. With great esteem etc.

57. Drafts of the Articles of Agreement with Blagdin for building these houses are in the *Washington Papers* at the end of October, 1798. Blagdin signs his name to it "Blagdin."

58. The draft, in the writing of Tobias Lear, is in *District of Columbia Letters and Papers* in the Library of Congress.

***To WILLIAM THORNTON**

Mount Vernon, October 28, 1798.

Library of Congress

Dear Sir: When Mr. Blagden came here on friday, I was engaged in my usual ride; from which I only returned a little before dinner, and found Mr. and Mrs. Law, with Govr. Crawford and his lady here. These circumstances, and Mr. Blagden's return immediately after dinner, allowed me no time to acknowledge the receipt of your obliging favor of the 25th. Instant.

For the information you have been so kind as to give me relatively to General Lee's City property, I thank you; but I had no idea of allowing him more for half lots than whole ones were to be obtained at.

If you have determined, to build a house or houses of similar elevation with those I am contracting for, you shall be extremely welcome to avail yourself of my end wall and to run up your Chimneys accordingly, without any allowance being made therefor (which I cannot accept) as the kindnesses I have received from you greatly overpays any little convenience or benefit you can derive from my Wall. If Mr. Frost is disposed to build a house *immediately*, or very soon; and will give it an accordant elevation, it would be agreeable to me that he should erect Chimnies on the South end similar to your's on the North end of my buildings. With respect to your *own* accomodation you will please to give Mr. Blagden such Instructions when he enters upon the Walls as to suit your views perfectly.

Whether, as there is water so handy, it be necessary to sink a Well, is a matter that circumstances must regulate. If one should be dug, I would range it with the partition Wall of the buildings, that

if ever they are occupied as distinct houses, one Pump with two leavers and pipes may subserve both.

I am in sentiment with you and Mr. Law, that a five feet Area is too narrow; but whence the remedy? If the regulations will not allow more, and cannot be altered, it must be indured,

Library of Congress

or the buildings must recede from the Street which would be exceptionable in another respect.

Although the Commissioners have been obliging, and ready throughout the whole of this business to render me every aid I could wish, and am I persuaded would continue to do it; yet, as I shall be bound by Contract (with Mr. Blagden) to supply his wants, agreeably to the Conditions of it, and this can be accomplished with more ease by an Individual than by the Board; the setting of which, at times, may be impeded by the absence of some of its members when most inconvenient for his calls; and as you reside in the City, and always there; and have moreover been so obliging as to offer to receive the Bills and pay their amount (when presented by Mr. Blagden) I will avail myself of the kindness: and accordingly, send a Check upon the Bank of Columbia, which will carry a credit of five hundred dollars (left there) when I was in the City last, to be drawn for by you, for the above purpose, as occasion may require: and at all times on notice being given, the Bank shall be replenished, and subject to your draughts to satisfy the Bills of expenditure, of which you will be so good as to inform Mr. Blagden.

Upon conversing more fully with Mr. Blagden upon the frontispiece of the Doors, and considering

that to make them of Stone instead of Wood, will add durability to the work, I have agreed to allow the difference, viz \$150 that they may be executed with the latter. And as he represented in strong terms, the wishes of Mr. Francis that a part of the Cellars should be vaulted, for the benefit of Wine, I have agreed to this also. He thinks the additional cost may amount to \$100 dollars more; but having made no estimate thereof it shall be charged at what it really stands him.

Whether he begins, or not, to lay the foundation of the building this Autumn, he ought by all means to have the Stone and sand on the spot to begin early in the Spring. The carting now, is so much better than it will be then, that he must find this an eligible measure. His

Library of Congress

lime too ought to be secured, and his flooring Plank to be good and procured early, tried up, and seasoned, or the floors will shrink. With very great esteem etc.59

To HENRY LEE

March 2, 1797.

Sir: In answer to your enquiry concerning the Land I sold to you, last year, I can inform you from my own knowledge.

It is part of the great Dismal Swamp, about 42 Miles from Norfolk convenient to the Canal now Cutting, its soil extremely rich covered with Cypress and Juniper, the under growth Cane &ca. I am etc. 43

59. From the *William Thornton Papers* in the Library of Congress.

42. Left blank in the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

43. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

***To RICHARD PARKINSON**

Mount Vernon, November 28, 1797.

Sir: Your letter dated "Doncaster August 28th. 1797" has been received.

In answer thereto, I inform you, that *I had* engaged my largest farm to Gentleman in the vicinity of it for the ensuing year (on the terms mentioned in the plan I took the liberty of transmitting to Sir John Sinclair, and which, having seen as you say, it is unnecessary for me to detail) but some circumstances afterwards occurring, unforeseen at the time, induced a postponement of the measure until the year 1799, when it may, or may not, as I shall find it most convenient, be renewed.

Library of Congress

The other farms are entirely free, and must remain in my possession until the crops of 1798 (the greater part of which being in the ground) are harvested. Of course, if you should come to this country in March next, shall then like any of my farms, and we should be mutually disposed to bargain for one of them, *on lease*, it is not probable there will be any impediment in the way. In the meantime, you may be assured that it would be highly satisfactory to me, to have English, or Scotch farmers who are able and willing, and who can be well recommended to me, to be the Cultivators of the farms of my Mount Vernon estate.

I not only approve of your circumspect conduct in viewing the farms previous to engagement, but can assure you that I should be unwilling to enter into any contract with any person for either of them *before it was done* as no agreement would be pleasing to me that did not give mutual satisfaction.

I thank you for your kind intention of sending me your treatise on Agriculture, entitled, "the practical farmer" and will cheerfully pay the cost of it. I am etc.

***To SIR JOHN SINCLAIR**

Mount Vernon, July 10, 1798.

Sir: It is not more strange than true, that your letter of the 15th. of July 1797, was not received by me until the 28th. Ulto; accompanied with the original Surveys of the Counties of Clackmannan, Kinross and Sterling. The Packet appeared to have passed through the hands of Mr. King (our Minister) and to have been forwarded by a Mr. Frederick Lee in the Ship Adriana; but through what circuitous route, to be eleven months on its passage, is not easy to determine, as it came from the Post Office to me without explanation, but in very good order.

I perceive too, in looking over my file of unanswered letters, that I am indebted for your obliging favour of the 24th. of February: received since I had the honor to Address you on

Library of Congress

the 15th. of May by my neighbour and friend the Revd. Mr. Fairfax and that my thanks are, in a particular manner also due to the politeness of the Board of Agriculture for directing a compleat set of its Works to be neatly bound, and sent to me.

The manner in which the early Wheat (respecting which you enquire) came into this Country, is not ascertained. The history of it, so far as it has come to my knowledge, I will relate. A Farmer, walking in a field of Wheat when it was in bloom, discovered a plant or two, that was perfectly ripe, and carefully separating it from the rest, sowed it at the usual time the following Autumn. From this *small* beginning (abt. seven years ago) this State, and those adjoining, are well in Seed. The grain is white, full and heavy; weighing, generally, two or three pounds more in the bushel of Winchester measure. It makes excellent

flour; and in tight loamy land inclining to Sand it is said to be more productive of grain, and less of Straw than Wheat in common. It is a tender plant, and apt to receive damage, both in the field and Garners. It will not, from report, bear transportation. Of a vessel load sent to Philadelphia for Seed, hardly any of it vegetated; and some farmers go so far as to declare, that they are obliged to spread what is intended for Seed, thin on their Barn floors and turn it frequently to prevent the injury above mentioned. From my own experience I can add but little, for as my land is heavy, stiff and slow, not much of it has been sown; but, from the growth of the present year, I send you a sack; that by experiment you may ascertain the utility of cultivating it in England. It is fit to harvest three weeks sooner than the Lamas. To give it the best chance to escape injury on Ship board, I have requested the Owner of the Vessel (a Mr. Wm. Wilson of Alexandria) to give it in particular charge to the Master, desiring him to keep the Sack in his Cabbin or Steerage.

The Egyptian Wheat, a head or two of which you had the goodness to send me (about two years ago) has not answered, with me. The first year it shot out lateral branches from the heads pretty generally; but this year the heads had hardly any, and in neither year did the grain fill well, and appears to have sustained more injury from the severity of our last

Library of Congress

Winter, than the wheat in common; although that was great in the extreme in the middle and upper parts of this, and the States bordering thereon; occasioned by the long winter and severe frosts with very little Snow. Nearer the Sea Board, contrary to what is usual, they have had more Snow, and of course the Crops of Winter grain are better; but on the whole they are remarkably short.

With very great esteem, &c.

***To DOCTOR JAMES ANDERSON**

Mount Vernon, July 25, 1798.

Esteemed Sir: Your favour of the 8th. of February came safe, and would have received an earlier acknowledgment if any thing had sooner occurred, worthy of communication.

I hope you have not only got relieved of the fever from which you were then recovering, but of the langour with which it had affected you; and that you are now engaged in the literary pursuits of which you gave the outlines, and which with your pen and under your arrangement of the subjects, must be curious, entertaining and Instructive. Thus persuaded, if you propose to carry the work on the plan of subscription, it would give me pleasure to be enrolled in the list of subscribers.

I little imagined, when I took my last leave of the walks of Public life and retired to the Shades of my Vine and Fig tree that any event would arise *in my day* that could bring me again on a public theatre. But the unjust, ambitious and intoxicated conduct of France towards these U: States has been, and continues to be such, that it must be opposed by a firm and manly resistance, or we shall not only hazard the Subjugation of our Government but the Independence of our Nation also; both being evidently struck at by a lawless Domineering Power who respects no Rights,

and is restrained by no Treaties when it is found inconvenient to observe them.

Library of Congress

Thus situated, sustaining daily injuries, even indignities, with a patient forbearance, from a sincere desire to live in Peace and Harmony with all the World; the French Directory, mistaking the motives; the American character; and supposing that the *People* of this Country were divided, and would give countenance to their nefarious measures, have proceeded to exact loans (or in other words contributions) and to threaten us, in case of non compliance with their wild, unfounded and inconsistent complaints that we should share the fate of Venice and other Italian States.

This has roused the People from their slumbers and have filled them with indignation from one extremity to the other of the Union, and I trust, if they should attempt to carry their threats into effect and invade our Territorial, as they have done our Commercial Rights, they will meet a Spirit that will give them more trouble than they are aware of in the Citizens of these States.

When every thing Sacred, and dear to Freemen is thus threatned, I could not consistent with the principles which have actuated me through life, remain an idle spectator, and refuse to obey the call of my Country to lead its Armies for *defence* and therefore have pledged myself to come forward whensoever the exigency shall require it.

With what sensations at my time of life (now turned of 66) without Ambition or interest to stimulate me thereto, I shall relinquish the peaceful walks to which I had retired, and in the shades of which I had fondly hoped to spend the remnant of a life worn down with cares in contemplation on the past and in scenes present

and to come of rural growth; let others, and especially those who are best acquainted with the construction of my Mind decide, while I believing that a man was not designed by the All wise Creator to live for himself alone prepare for the worst that can happen.

The Gardener you were so obliging as to send me continues to conduct himself extremely well. He is industrious, sober, and orderly, and understands his business. In short I never

Library of Congress

had a hired servant that pleased me better, and what adds to my satisfaction is that he is content himself, having declared that he never was happier in his life. My best wishes will always attend you, and with very grt. esteem &c.

***To JOHN TRUMBULL**

Mount Vernon, July 25, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 6th. of Mar, with the proofs of the two first Prints of the American Revolution came duly to hand, and merit those thanks which I offer with great cordiality.

Such repeated proofs of your kind attention to me, affect my sensibility without enabling me to express it in the manner I wish; further than to assure you, in strong terms, of my sincere friendship; of which I hope, and trust, you had no doubt before.

New Scenes are opening upon us, and a very unexpected one, as it respects myself, is unfolding.

What will be the final result of these measures is only known to that Providence in whose directions all things are. When I bid adieu last to the Theatre of public life, I thought it was hardly possible that any event would arise, *in my day*, that would induce me to tread that stage again.

But this is an age of Wonders, and I have once more consented to become an Actor in the great Drama. The conduct of the French Nation towards our own, has been so extraordinary and outrageous, as to have drawn forth an expression of the public sentiment as unequivocal, and pleasing to the friends of this Country, as it was unexpected, and must be mortifying to the Rulers of that, and their Partizans here. Both of whom, it is now evident, have been greatly mistaken in their calculation of the Temper of the *People* from one end of the Union to the other.

Library of Congress

When may we look for the pleasure of seeing you in this Country again. Mrs. Washington (who is as well as usual) and Miss Custis unite with me in every good wish for you; and with much truth I remain, etc.

***To WILLIAM VANS MURRAY**

Mount Vernon, August 10, 1798.

Dear Sir: I doubt not, but that you have already set me down as an unprofitable correspondent, and with too much truth perhaps; but not with as much culpability on my part, as appearances may indicate.

I have written you several letters, and having put one or two for Mr. Dandridge⁶⁶ under your covers, without receiving any acknowledgment of them, the presumption is, that they have fallen into other hands. Nothing however was contained in either of them that could entitle them to the *honor* of a place in the Bureaus of France, to which several of my *private* letters, it seems, have found a passage. And but for the impropriety of such conduct, and the deprivation, and invasion of anothers right, all might go; as I write or say nothing I wish to conceal from that Nation; My Politics being straight, and my views undisguised towards it, and all others.

In examining my file of unanswered letters, I find two of yours, dated the 9th. of October and 1st. of November among them. In acknowledging the receipt of which, permit me to thank you for the interesting communications which are detailed therein; and to express a wish, that in your moment of leisure, you would favor me with a continuation of matters so satisfactory to be informed of.

I should have wrote oftener to you, if, in retirement, I had found matter sufficient for amusement: but revolving days producing similar scenes of domestic and rural

Library of Congress

occurrences, none interesting except to those who were engaged in them; knowing that all things of public concern, together with the Gazettes of different complexions were

66. Bartholomew Dandridge.

regularly transmitted to you, from the proper Department, and knowing also that you had friends near the fountain of Intelligence who were in the habit of corresponding with you, I conceived that details of the latter kind, from me, might be less correct and at best but second hand information; and therefore avoided giving you the trouble to receive it.

But new, and unexpected scenes opening upon us, and all my plans of my retirement likely to be marred by the Domineering spirit and boundless ambition of a Nation whose Turpitude have set *all obligations* divine and human, at naught, may in time to come, enable me to communicate some things more interesting than are to be found in the circle of my present perambulations. In doing which I shall always feel pleasure.

Little did I expect, when my valadictory Address was presented to the People of the United States, that any event would occur in my day, that could draw me from the peaceful walks and tranquil shades of Mount Vernon; where I had fondly hoped to spend the remnant of a life, worn down with public cares, in ruminating on the variegated scenes through which I have passed, and in the contemplation of others which are yet in embryo.

I will hope however, that when the Despots of France find how much they have mistaken the American character, and how much they have been deceived by their partisans *among us* , that their senses will return to them, and an appeal to Arms for the purpose of repelling an Invasion at least, will be rendered unnecessary. To be prepared for them, however, is

the most certain, and perhaps the least expensive mode of averting the evil. Neither they, nor their abettors here, expected I believe, that such a spirit would be roused as the occasion has manifested, amongst all classes *of our Citizens* , except the leaders of

Library of Congress

opposition; upon their obtaining correct statements of the treatment they have received from their *good* and *magnanimous* Allies. The difficulty under which they will find themselves, lies in treading back their steps. But Envoy Logan⁶⁷ may be sent to keep them out of it; or, which is to the full as likely, to direct them into another course to obtain the same end.

Present me, if you please, to Mrs. Murray; in which Mrs. Washington and Miss Custis unite, as they do to yourself; and in remembrance to Mr. Dandridge, And be assured of the sincere regard and esteem etc.

***To ANDREW ELLIOT BELKNAP**

Mount Vernon, October 8, 1798.

Sir: Your letter of the 20th Lilt came duly to hand. William Herbert Esqr. of Alexandria will receive, distribute, and collect the money agreeably to the subscription I sent you; but it will be necessary to accompany the Books, with the original Paper, or a copy thereof for his information with respect to the Subscribers.

You will please to recollect that I am in possession already of the *first* Volume of the American Biography written by your deceased and worthy father.

67. Dr. George Logan, a self-constituted envoy from the United States to France.

and I will just add that, if to my name is annexed more than *one* Copy, it was done with a View to encourage the work in *continuation* ; more therefore would be useless to me. And if the surplus could be disposed of where they are, it would be more agreeable to me. but do as you please in this respect. I am etc.

***To WILLIAM HERBERT**

Mount Vernon, October 8, 1798.

Library of Congress

Dear Sir: I thank you for the information contained in your letter of the 5th. instant and will avail myself of your kind offer, if circumstances shd. render it expedient for me to have recourse to the Bank of Alexandria. Either of the sums mentioned therein, is more than I shall want; and if I could receive what I ought to do, I shall have no occasion for any from that source.

I will inform young Mr. Belknap of your obliging offer, and with very great esteem and regard am Dear Sir etc.

***To JAMES ANDERSON**

Mount Vernon, November 3, 1798.

Mr. Anderson: By the way of Boston, I have just received a letter from Mr Richd Parkinson, dated "Liverpool 28th. Augt. 1798"

The contents of this letter have surprised me; and that you may know from whence

this surprise has proceeded, I shall lodge in your hands (as I am going from home, and may be absent four or five weeks) Mr. Parkinsons first and second letters to me; and my answer to him; (a duplicate, and I think a triplicate of which I forwarded).

By this correspondence you will perceive that, Mr. Parkinson, through the medium of Sir Jno Sinclair, had seen the Plans of my Mount Vernon Farms, and was acquainted with the terms on which they were to be *let*. These terms I also deposit with you. It appears moreover by his first letter, dated the 28th. of Augt. 1797, that he intended to be in this Country in the month of March; and by his second letter of the 27th. of Septr. following, that his arrival *might* be delayed until April or May. It is evident also, from the tenor of these letters that he knew my farms could not remain uningaged longer than the month of September. Yet, he neither comes; sends an Agent to act for him; nor even writes a line, to account for the delay; and to know on what footing his former proposition stood.

Library of Congress

Under these circumstances, I had no more expectation of Mr. Parkinson's arrival (especially with such a costly Cargo as he represents) than I had of seeing Sir Jno. Sinclair himself, until his letter of the 28th. of August from Liverpool came to hand.

Nor under the circumstances I have detailed, (which will appear correct from the papers I leave) do I know what Mr. Parkinsons views now are. He surely could not expect, after having placed the Occupancy of one of my farms on a contingency, that is, his liking it upon an examination thereof; after promissing that this examination should take place by the month of May last; after letting me hear nothing more from him for a whole year; and after knowing that I was obliged to make arrangements for the ensuing year

by the month of September in the present year, to find a farm ready for his reception in Novr.

If he did not expect this, Mr. Parkinson stands in no other relation to me, than he does to any other Gentleman in this Country; and if he did expect it, it may with justice be observed, that, he has done so unwarranted by the information that was given him, and has entered upon the measure precipitately, having made no adequate provision for the heavy expence he is running into. But, as matters are circumstances, the question *now*, is not what ought to have been, but what can be done to serve him.

With respect to my paying £850 for the freight of the Vessel, it is beside the question altogether, for the best of all reasons, viz, because I have not the means. And with respect to the animals which are said to be embarked, I would put myself to greater, or less inconvenience in providing for them (upon just and reasonable terms) according to what shall appear to be his intention with respect to my River Farm. If it be to lease It on the terms which have been proposed. If there is a prospect of my being secure in letting it; and a prospect that the bargain will be durable; and lastly, if you can devise any expedient by which the business can be accomplished under existing circumstances, as they respect the coming and the going Overseers; the Negroes; Stock; and growing grain; I should be

Library of Congress

well disposed to lend all the aid in my power towards the temporary accomodation of the animals he has brought over. Except the Stallions, for whom, and more especially for their Keepers (who are generally very troublesome people) I have no conveniency at any of the Farms, and to suffer them to be in the Barns,

or Stables with their horses, would be to risk the whole by fire. Nor have I any place at the Mansion house for either horses or men, as the conveniences thereat, are not more than adequate to the permanent, and occasional demands by visitors.

In a word, under the present aspect of things; and without seeing Mr Parkinson or knowing under what auspices he comes, I scarcely know what sentiment to express respecting him; or what is proper to be done in this business; and therefore must leave it to you to form an opinion when you can take a nearer view of the subject, after his arrival, if this shd. happen during my absence, and act accordingly. To obtain a good tenant for River Farm, on just terms; with the prospects before mentioned, wd. be an inducement to me to go great lengths in a temporary accomodation: but if this is not to be expected from Mr. Parkinson, I feel no obligation on my part, to rectify mistakes which I had no hand in causing, and endeavoured to guard against. I remain etc.⁴

***To MAJOR GENERAL HENRY LEE**

Mount Vernon, November 4, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letters from Fredericksburgh and Stratford, have both been received; and their contents will be attended to when the list of applications come under consideration.

Tomorrow (being requested thereto by the Secretary of War) I shall set off for Trenton. This, of course, will deprive me of the pleasure of seeing you, while you are on the promised

4. From a photostat of the original in Cornell University Library.

Library of Congress

visit to this County. It is necessary therefore I shd. inform you that, no report (as indeed I expected would be the case) has been made by Mr. Jesse Simms relative to Major Harrisons Land, adjoining my mill. And that, to my surprise, when I came to examine the details of your City property, more attentively than it was in my power to do, in the hurried manner in wch the list of it was presented, and to make enquiry into the value thereof, I found that instead of lots of the Standard size (as I took it for granted they were) that each of those lying on Pennsylvania Avenue have been split into two parts (having only 25 feet front to them) and for these half lots, that I am asked more than lots equally convenient sell at. To receive payments on such terms, when my object was solely to accomodate you, could hardly be expected.

If you are disposed to part with your land near Harpers Ferry; Your land in Loudoun; any unincumbered property in the City; or, in short, almost any other that can be rendered productive, at a reasonable valuation by disinterested men of good character, I would accept it in payment rather than make difficulties, or be involved in disputes; although you well know that nothing will answer my purposes like the money, of which I am in extreme want, and *must* obtain on disadvantageous terms. But it is not to be expected from hence that I will receive the former at an arbitrary price, which every well informed person knows it cannot command.

The Deeds which passed between

you and me in the Month of April last, I sent to Mr. Bushrod Washington to have recorded; asking him at the sametime if they were not defective in proper recitals? Enclosed, or rather with this letter, Mr. Anderson will, when he hears of your being in Alexandria present you with his opinion thereon, with a Deed ready drawn, according to my Nephews directions for your signature. The one from me to you, I have acknowledged before Evidences, and request you will do the same by that from you to me. With great esteem etc.

***To WILLIAM B. HARRISON⁵**

Mount Vernon, November 4, 1798.

Sir: It has often been in my mind to ask, (if your tenements near my Mill are not under leases already) whether you would be inclined to let them to me, for a term of years? for what term and at what Rent?

I can assure you, most sincerely and candidly, that it is not because I want these tenements, that I make this enquiry; but to be relieved from Neighbours who are really a nuisance: and who could not live on the Land but by the practice of unjustifiable shifts. No care or attention within the compass of my power to use, can preserve my fields and Meadows from injuries, sustained by their Hogs, and other Stock. Rails are drawn from the Posts, in order to let in

the latter, and slips made to admit the former, in many places through my ditches, to the destruction of my grain, and grass.

To guard against damages of this sort, is, I do aver, my *sole* inducement to this enquiry. But it is not to be infered from hence, that I am disposed to pay a Rent disproportioned to the real value of the Tenements.

I need not to observe to you, Sir, that the land was originally poor; that it is exhausted beyond measure; that there is no timber on it; very little firing; and scarcely any Fencing. In short, that without aid from the adjacent Lands, which the tenants cannot obtain from the present Proprietors by *fair* means, the tenements cannot be supported much longer. This is a fair statement, and ought to be taken into consideration in fixing the Rent.

Under these circumstances, it is scarcely necessary to add, that I am not inclined to take the Tenements upon a short lease; for the reasons before mentioned; and because I should be obliged to have recourse to my own land to supply the deficiencies of yours; and

Library of Congress

that in a very short time too, to render the fields of any use. Unless the term therefore, for which it is granted, is commensurate with the expence to which I, or mine would be run, It would not answer my purposes to rent it.

It is not my expectation, or desire to disturb the *present* tenants, or such as you may have engaged, the ensuing year. My views extend to the year after, *only* , presuming your arrangements are made for 1799. Your answer will be agreeable to, Sir, Yours etc.

To ALEXANDER SPOTSWOOD

Philadelphia, November 22, 1798.

Dr. Sir: Your letter of the 13th. Inst. enclosing a publication under the signature of Gracchus, on the Alien and Sedition laws, found me at this place deeply engaged in business.

You ask my opinion of these Laws, professing to place Confidence in my judgment for the Compliment of wch. I thank you. But to give Opinions unsupported by reasons, might appear dogmatical, especially as you have declared that Gracchus has produced "the rough conviction in your mind of the unconstitutionality and inexpediency of the acts above mentioned." To go into an explanation on these points, I have neither leisure nor inclination, because it would occupy more time than I have to spare.

But I will take the liberty of advising such as are not "thoroughly convinced" and whose minds are yet open to conviction to read the pieces and hear the arguments which have been adduced in favor of as well as those against the Constitutionality and expediency of those laws before they decide. And Consider to what lengths a Certain description of men in our Country have already driven and even resolved to further drive matters and then ask themselves if it is not time and expedient to resort to protecting Laws against aliens for Citizens you certainly know are not affected by that law) who acknowledge no allegiance to this Country, and in many instances are sent

Library of Congress

among us (as there is the best Circumstantial evidence to prove) for the express purpose of poisoning the minds of our people and to sow dissensions among them, in order to alienate their affections from the Government of their Choice, thereby endeavoring to dissolve the Union, and of Course the fair and happy prospects which were unfolding to our view from the Revolution. But as I have observed before I have no time to enter the field of Politicks, and therefore shall only add my best Respects to the good family at New Post, and the assurances of being, Dr. Sir etc.¹⁶

***To JUDGE ALEXANDER ADDISON**

Philadelphia, December 6, 1798.

Sir: Your favor of the 21st. Ult., enclosing thoughts on the "Liberty of Speech and of the Press" in a Charge to the Grand "Juries of the County Courts of the fifth Circuit of the State of Pennsylvania" has been duly received, and I pray you to accept my thanks for this fresh haste. of your attention and politeness to me.

I am persuaded I *shall* read it with the same pleasure, and marked approbation that I have done your other productions of a similar nature which have come to my hands. I say *shall*, because my occupations since I came to this City have been such as scarcely to afford me time to look into a News-paper. With great esteem etc.¹⁹

16. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

19. From a facsimile in a sales catalogue, 1914. The original is in the Chapin Library, Williamstown, Mass.

***To WILLIAM THORNTON**

Mount Vernon, December 20, 1798.

Library of Congress

Dear Sir: Enclosed is a Check on the Bank of Alexandria for five hundred Dollars, to enable Mr. Blagden, by your draughts, to proceed in laying in Materials for carrying on my buildings in the Federal City.

I saw a building in Philadelphia of about the same front and elevation, that are to be given to my two houses, which pleased me. It consisted also of two houses united, Doors in the centre, a pediment in the roof and dormar window in each side of it in front; skylights in the rear. If this is not incongruous with rules of Architecture, I would be glad to have my two houses executed in this style. Let me request the favor of you to know from Mr. Blagden what the additional cost will be. I am etc.³³

To MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE

Mount Vernon, December 25, 1798.

My dear Sir: I am indebted to you for the following letters, dated the 6th of Octr. and 20th of Decr. of the last year. And 26th. of April, 20th. of May, 20th. of August and 5th. of Septr. in the present. If more have been written they have fallen into other hands, or miscarried on their passage.

Convinced as you must be of the fact, it wd. be a mere waste of time to assure you of the sincere

33. From a photostat of the original in the "Washington Photostats" in the Library of Congress.

and heartfelt pleasure I derived from finding by the above letters, that you had not only regained your liberty; but were in the enjoyment of better health than could have been expected from your long and rigorous confinement; and that madame La Fayette and the young ladies were able to Survive it attall. On these desirable events I can add with truth,

Library of Congress

that amongst your numerous friends none can offer his congratulations with more warmth, or who prays more sincerely for the perfect restoration of your ladies health, than I do.

It is equally unnecessary for me to apologize to you for my long silence; when by a recurrence to your own Letters you will find my excuse; for by these it will appear that if you had embarked for this country at the epochs mentioned therein no letters of mine could have arrived in Europe before your departure from thence; untill by your favor of the 20th. of Augt. I was informed, that your voyage to America was postponed for the reasons then given, and which conveyed the first Idea to my mind that a letter from me might find you in Europe.

The letter last mentioned together with that of the 5th. of September, found me in Phila. whither I had gone for the purpose of making some military arrangements with the Secretary of War, and where every moment of my time was so much occupied in that business, as to allow no leisure to attend to any thing else.

I have been thus circumstantial in order to impress you with the true cause of my silence and to remove from your mind if a doubt had arisen there that my friendship for you, had undergone no diminution or change. And that no one in the United States

would receive you with open arms, or with more ardent affection than I should, after the differences between this Country and France are adjusted and harmony between the nations is again restored. But it would be uncandid and incompatible with that friendship I have always professed for you, to say (and on your own account) that I wish it before. For you may be assured my dear Sir that the Scenes you would meet with, and the part you would be stimulated to act, in case of an open rupture or even if matters should remain in Statu quo, would be such as to place you in a Situation in which no address or human prudence, could free you from embarrassment. In a word you would lose the Confidence of one party or the other (perhaps) both were you here under these circumstances.

Library of Congress

To give you a Complete View of the politics and Situation of things in this Country would far exceed the limits of a letter; and to trace effects to their Causes would be a work of time. But the sum of them maybe given in a few words, and amounts to this. That a party exists in the United States, formed by a Combination of Causes, which oppose the Government in all its measures, and are determined (as all their Conduct evinces) by Clogging its Wheels indirectly to change the nature of it, and to Subvert the Constitution. To effect this no means which have a tendency to accomplish their purposes are left unessayed. The friends of Government who are anxious to maintain its neutrality, and to preserve the Country in peace, and adopt measures to produce these, are charged by them as being

Monarchists, Aristocrats, and infractors of the Constitution; which according to their Interpretation of it would be a mere Cypher; while they arrogated to themselves, (until the eyes of the people began to discover how outrageously they had been treated in their Commercial concerns by the Directory of France, and that, that was a ground on which they could no longer tread). the sole merit of being the friends of France, when in fact they had no more regard for that Nation than for the Grand Turk, further than their own views were promoted by it; denouncing those who differed in Opinion; whose principles are purely American; and whose sole view was to observe a strict neutrality, with acting under British influence, and being directed by her counsels, now with being her Pensioners.

This is but a short sketch, of what requires much time to illustrate; and is given with no other view, than to shew you what would be your situation here at this crisis under such circumstances as it unfold.

You have expressed a wish, worthy [of] that benevolence of your heart, that I would exert all my endeavors to avert the Calamitous effects of a rupture between our Countries. Believe me my dear friend that no man can deprecate an event of this sort with more horror than I should and that no one, during the whole of my Administration laboured more incessantly and with more sincerity and zeal than I did to avoid this, and to render every

Library of Congress

justice, nay favor to France, consistently with the neutrality which had been proclaimed to these

sanctioned by Congress and approved by the State legislatures, and the people at large in their Town and County meetings. But neutrality was not the point at which France was aiming. for whilst it was crying peace, Peace, and pretending that they did not wish us to be embroiled in their quarrel with great Britain they were pursuing measures in *this Country* so repugnant to its Sovereignty, and so incompatible with every principle of neutrality, as *must* inevitably, have produced a war with the latter. And when they found that the Government *here* was resolved to adhere steadily to its plan of neutrality, their next step was to destroy the confidence of the people in, and to separate them from it; for which purpose their diplomatic agents were specially instructed; and in the attempt were aided by inimical characters among ourselves not as I observed before because they loved France more than any other nation, but because it was an instrument to Facilitate the destruction of their own Government.

Hence proceeded those charges which I have already enumerated, against the friends to peace and order. No doubt remains on this side of the water, that to the representations of and encouragement given by these people, is to be ascribed in a great measure, the intentions of our Treaty with France; their violation of the Laws of nations, disregard of Justice and even of sound policy. But herein they have not only deceived France, but were deceived themselves, as the event has proved, for no sooner did the yeomanry of this Country come to a right understanding of the nature of the dispute, than they rose as one man with a tender of their Services; their lives and their fortunes, to support the Government of their

choice, and to defend their country. This has produced a declaration from them (how sincere let others judge), that, if the French should attempt to invade this Country that they themselves would be amongst the foremost to repel the attack.

Library of Congress

You add in another place that the Executive Directory are disposed to accommodation of all differences. If they are Sincere in this declaration, let them evidence it by actions, for words unaccompanied therewith will not be much regarded now. I would pledge myself, that the Government and people of the United States will meet them heart and hand at *fair* negotiation; having no wish more ardent, than to live in peace with all the world, provided they are suffered to remain undisturbed in their just rights. Of this their patience, forbearance, and repeated solicitations under accumulated injuries and insults are incontestable proofs; but it is not to be infered from hence that they will suffer any nation under the sun (while they retain a proper sense of Virtue and Independence) to trample upon their rights with impunity, or to direct, or influence the internal concerns of their Country.

It has been the policy of France and that of the opposition party among ourselves, to inculcate a belief that all those who have exerted themselves to keep this Country in peace, did it from an overweening attachment to Great Britain. But it is a solemn truth and you may count upon it, that it is void of foundation; and propagated for no other purpose, than to excite popular clamour against those whose aim was peace, and whom they wished out of their way.

That there are many among us, who wish to see this Country embroiled on the side of Great Britain, and others who are anxious that we should take part with France against her, admits of no doubt. But it is a fact on which you may entirely and absolutely rely, that the Governing powers of the Country, and a large part of the people are truly Americans in principle, attached to the interest of it; And unwilling under any circumstances whatsoever to participate in the Politics or Contests of Europe: Much less since they have found that France, having forsaken the ground she first took, is interfering in the internal concerns of all nations, Neutral as well as Belligerent, and setting the world in an uproar.

Library of Congress

After my valedictory address to the people of the United States you would no doubt be somewhat surprised to hear, that I had again consented to Gird on the Sword. But, having Struggled Eight or nine Years against the invasion of our rights by one power, and to establish an Independence of it, I could not remain an unconcerned spectator of the attempt of another Power to accomplish the same object, though in a different way, with less pretensions indeed without any at all.

On the Politics of Europe I shall express no Opinion, nor make any inquiry who is Right or who is Wrong. I wish well to all nations and to all men. My politics are plain and simple. I think every nation has a Right to establish that form of Government

under which It conceives It shall live most happy; provided it infracts no Right or is not dangerous to others. And that no Governments ought to interfere with the internal concerns of Another, except for the security of what is due to themselves.

I sincerely hope that Madame la Fayette will accomplish all her wishes in France and return safe to you with renovated health. I congratulate you on the marriage of your eldest daughter, and beg to be presented to them both and to Virginia in the most Respectful and affectionate terms; to George I have written. In all these things Mrs. Washington (as the rest of the family would do if they were at home) most cordially joins me: as she does in wishing you and them every felicity which this life can afford, as some consolation for your long cruel, and painful Confinement and Sufferings.

I shall now only add what you knew well before that with the most Sincere friendship and affectionate regard, I am always &c.

P. S. Your old aid de camp, and my worthy nephew George A. Washington; died about 5 years ago of a palmanory Complaint, he left 3 fine Children a daughter and two Sons, the eldest of the boys was called after you.

Library of Congress

The letters herewith enclosed and directed one to yourself, another to George, and the third to Mr. Frestel, have been some time in my possession and detained to be delivered to you *here* upon the same principle that prevented me from writing to you at an earlier period.³⁴

***To GEORGE WASHINGTON MOTIER DE LAFAYETTE**

Mount Vernon, December 25, 1798.

My dear George: Having written a long letter to General La Fayette I shall write a short one to you; and it shall relate principally, if not altogether, to domestic concerns.

At the time you left this country you would not, less than I did, believe that in the course of events any occurrence could arise, which would again take me from the walks of Mount Vern. But the injuries we have received, and are threatened with, have induced me once more (if occasion should require it) to tread the thorny path of public life, and for this purpose I have accepted a Commission to command the Armies of the United States, if, unfortunately, we should be forced into a War.

Your acquaintance Lawrence Lewis is appointed Captain of a Troop of Light Dragoons; but intends, before he enters the Camp of Mars to engage in that of Venus; Eleanor Custis and he having entered into a contract of marriage; which, I understand, is to be fulfilled on my birthday (the 22d. of Feby). Washington Custis preferring a Military career to literary pursuits, is appointed Cornet in Lewis's Troop, and Washington Craik a Lieutenancy. Young Carroll of Carrollton, will be a Volunteer Aid of mine, and Mr. Lear is my Secretary.

34. From the "Letter Book" copy in the *Washington Papers*.

Young gentlemen of the first families, fortunes and expectations in the United States, are offering their Services; but I hope, and most ardently pray, that the Directory in your Country will not, by a perseverance in the insults and injuries which they have heaped

Library of Congress

on this, make it necessary to resort to Arms to repel an Invasion, or to do ourselves justice. I can undertake to affirm, that necessity *only* will drive us to it, although I am but just returned from a six weeks visit in Philadelphia to make arrangements there for it, eventually.

Mrs. and Mr. Law and their pet Eliza, Mr. and Mrs. Peter and their two children, and Doctr. Smart and family (whom I ought to have mentioned first) are all well; and would, if they knew I was writing to you, request to be remembered to you in the most affectionate terms. I recollect no material change that has taken place in men or things since you left America. Alexandria continues to thrive, and the Public buildings in the federal City go on well: and many private ones are commencing for the accommodation of the Members of Congress, and Officers of Government, preparatory to the removal of the Government to that place.

Mrs. Washington holds you in constant remembrance, and offers you every good wish, which she prays you to extend to your amiable mother and Sisters whenever it may be in your Power. Nelly, Washington and Lewis would, I am sure, unite heartily in these, were they at home; but all of them are absent, the first at Hope Park, and the other two beyond the Mountains. When the clouds which at present overcast the Political horison are dispelled, it would give all your friends great pleasure to

see you in your old walks, and to none more than to your Sincere and affectionate friend.

PS. If Mr. Frestal should be with you, or you should have occasion to write to him, be so good as to present him with the best wishes of this family.

***To WILLIAM VANS MURRAY**

Mount Vernon, December 26, 1798.

Dear Sir: Having some cause to believe the Vessel was captured, in which went the original of the enclosed copy, I forward a duplicate.

Library of Congress

I returned a few days ago from Philadelphia, whither I had been for the purpose of making some Military arrangements with the Secretary of War respecting the Force wch. is about to be raised. It was there I received a letter from Mr. Dandridge, announcing his intention of returning to America, (partly on account of his health), expressing in lively and grateful terms his sense of your attentions to, and kind treatment of him, adding that as experience had more and more convinced him, that a sedentary life was incompatible both with his health and turn of mind (a sentiment he had often expressed whilst he lived with me) he wished for an appointment in the Army we were about to raise. The application arriving in the nick of time, he stands arranged as Captn. of a Company of Infantry in one of the

Regiments wh will be raised in Virginia, and it is necessary he should enter upon the duties thereof as soon as it can be made convenient.

Mr. Envoy Logan, who arrived at Philadelphia about the time I did, brings very *flattering* accounts of the Disposition of the French Directory *towards this Country* . He has dined with one, supped with another, and in short has been as familiar with them all, (that were in place) as the hand is with its glove: and is not a little employed in propagating this Doctrine in all parts of the U: States by means of the Presses which are at the command of that Party. He says the inclination of France to be upon good terms with the United States is *now* so strong, that it *must* be our own mismanagement, and disinclination to Peace, if matters with that Country are not accommodated upon terms honorable and advantageous to this.³⁵

Both houses of Congress were formed before I left Philadelphia, but had not been long enough in Session for an opinion of the result to be prognosticated.

Their answers to the Speech would, it seems, have passed unanimously, could Mr. Varnum³⁶ of Massachusetts have retained his Spleen. How far this measure is indicative of a tranquil and energetic Session, remains to be decided by more unequivocal evidence.

Library of Congress

The Alien and Sedition Laws,³⁷ are now the desiderata in the Opposi[t]ion. But any thing else would have done; and something there will always be, for them to torture, and

35. On Jan. 30, 1799, the President approved "An Act for the punishment of certain crimes therein specified," which described precisely activities like those of Dr. Logan, and affixed a punishment of a fine not exceeding \$5,000, and imprisonment of not less than 6 months, not more than 3 years. A similar law is now in force.

36. Joseph Bradley Varnum, Member of Congress from Massachusetts.

37. Approved July 6 and 14, 1798, respectively.

to disturb the public mind with their unfounded and ill favored forebodings.

The family join me in presenting Mrs. Murray and yourself with the Complimts. of the Season, and in wishing you many happy returns of them. With very sincere esteem, &c.

***To RICHARD RAYNAL KEENE**

Mount Vernon, December 28, 1798.

Sir: At all times, when it is in my power to do it with tolerable convenience to myself, I feel pleasure in aiding the deserving and meritorious.

But let me observe at the sametime, that a very mistaken opinion prevails, with respect to my means of accomplishing this, in a pecuniary way; for was I to judge of these opinions by the numerous applications which are made to me for money, it must be conjectured by them, that I have resources far, very far indeed, beyond what the fact will warrant.

I can assure you, that I find it no easy matter to keep my expenditures within the limits of my receipts; and that, without travelling out of my own circle, I find more than enough to require all the surplusage of the latter, when I have any to spare.

Library of Congress

I return the papers contained in your

letter of the 24th. instant, agreeably to your request; and as I want no evidence of your request, I send the letter also. I am etc.

***To JOHN MARSHALL**

Mount Vernon, December 30, 1798.

My dear Sir: If General Pinckney should have left Richmond, let me request the favor of you to forward the packet herewith sent, in the manner he may have directed; or, as your own judgment shall dictate, to ensure its delivery to him in Hallifax, or on the Road thro' North Carolina.

The Alien and Sedition Laws having employed many Pens, and we hear a number of tongues, in the Assembly of this State; the latter, I understand, to a very pernicious purpose; I send you the production of Judge Addison on these subjects. Whether any new lights are cast upon them by his charge, you will be better able to decide when you have read it. My opinion is, that if this, or other writings flashed conviction as clear as the Sun in its Meridian brightness, it would produce no effect in the conduct of the leaders of opposition; who, have points to

carry, from which nothing will divert them in the prosecution. When you have read the charge give it to Bushrod Washington, or place it to any other uses you may think proper. I wish success to your Election, most sincerely, and if it should fail (of which I hope there is not the least danger) I shall not easily forgive myself for being urgent with you to take a Poll. I offer you the compliments of the Season, and with much truth remain etc.

***To WILLIAM THORNTON**

Mount Vernon, December 30, 1798.

Library of Congress

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 25th. instant, enclosing Messrs. Blagden and Lenthals estimate of the cost of adding a Pediment, and Parapet to the roof of my buildings in the Federal City, has been duly received, but the plan, to which it refers, did not accompany it.

This plan, and other accounts, I ought to be possessed of, and Mr. Blagden is under promise to take a copy thereof for his own use, to work by, and send me the original draught. I pray you to remind him of this promise.

Presuming that it is not necessary for Mr. Blagden's convenience that I should, at this moment, decide upon the above estimate; nor whether I shall adopt

the measure at all; I shall, if no disadvantage will attend the delay, suspend my determination until I can visit the City, and receive some further explanations respecting the consequent alterations which will be occasioned by this Pediment, not at present well understood by me; owing to my entire ignorance of the technical terms in which they are expressed. At which time also, I will make arrangements for giving further pecuniary Aids.

Rules of Architecture are calculated, I presume, to give Symmetry, and just proportion to all the Orders, and parts of building in order to please the eye. Small departures from *strict* rules are discoverable only by the skilful Architects, or by the eye of criticism; while ninety nine of a hundred, deficient of their knowledge, might be pleased with things not quite orthodox. This, more than probable, would be the case relative to a Pediment in the Roof over the *doors* of my houses in the City.

That a Parapet in addition (for the reasons you have assigned) would have a pleasing and useful effect, cannot be doubted. When the roof of a building is to be seen, and when it is designed for Chambers it must be seen, something to relieve the view of a plain and dead Surface, is indispensable: for this reason it was, I thought, and still do think that Dormars are to be preferred to Sky lights in the front; on the other hand, if the roof is so flat as not to be seen at all, or so low as, in

Library of Congress

a manner to be hid by a Parapet, I should give a decided preference to Sky lights.

These ideas, as you will readily perceive, proceed from a person who avows his ignorance of Architectural principles, and who has no other guide but his eye, to direct his choice: I never, for a moment; contemplated *two* Pediments, one over the door of each house: my great object, was to give them the appearance of one. But as I have observed in the former part of this letter: I will suspend coming to any decision until the consequences of the proposed alterations are better understood by me.

The freedom with which you have expressed your sentiments on this occasion, is highly pleasing to me. Sorry indeed should I have been on this, as I shall be on any future occurrence, when your opinion may be asked, if they are not rendered with the utmost frankness and candour.

The compliments of the Season are presented to Mrs. Thornton, yourself &ca. by all parts of this family, and with great esteem etc.

***To MAJOR GENERAL HENRY LEE**

Mount Vernon, December 31, 1798.

Dear Sir: Presuming you have not received the letter, of which the enclosed is a copy, I trouble you with a duplicate of it. And have sent to Mr. Bushrod Washington the Deeds to, and from you, for Execution; and pray you to acknowledge before Evidences *that* from you to me, *Now* , also out of date.

With great esteem etc.

***To BUSHROD WASHINGTON**

Mount Vernon, December 31, 1798.

Library of Congress

My dear Sir: It gave me pleasure to hear by Judge Cushing, that you had returned from your Southern Circuit in good health. I presume you will soon have to undertake another journey, when I shall hope to see you.

I was not unmindful of your application in behalf of Captn. Blackburne.⁴⁰ But when the list of applicants came to be unfolded, it was found that there were so many requests of a similar nature, from Officers of the existing Corps, that it was impossible to comply with them, and difficult to discriminate; for which reasons, it was deemed best to reject them in toto; especially, as in the raising of New Corps, it rarely happens, that Officers are drawn from the old; and nothing but length

40. Richard Scott Blackburn (Blackburne). He was captain of United States Artillery and Engineers.

of Service, or very distinguished merit, or powerful interest or influence, gives birth to the measure.

By this conveyance, I have sent to Genl Marshall, Judge Addisons charge to the Grand Juries of the County Courts of the fifth Circuit, of the State of Pennsylvania, and requested, after he had read it, to give it to you, or dispose of it in any other manner he might think proper. This charge is on the Liberty of Speech and of the Press, and is a justification of the Sedition and Alien Laws.

But I do not believe that any thing contained in it; in Evans's⁴¹ Pamphlet;⁴² or in any other writing, will produce the least change in the conduct of the leaders of opposition, to the measures of the General Government. They have points to carry, from which no reasoning, no inconsistency of conduct, no absurdity, can divert them. If, however, such writings should produce conviction in the minds of those who have, hitherto, placed faith in their assertions, it will be a fortunate event for this Country.

Library of Congress

Has any thing been done, and what, with my correspondent Mr. Langhorne? I have heard, since my return from Philadelphia, that there has been some stir in the matter, but of the result I am ignorant. The family here present the Compliments of the Season to you and Mrs. Washington. I remain your sincere friend, &c.

41. Thomas Evans, a Member of Congress from Virginia.

42. Supposed to be the *Address to the People of Virginia Respecting the Alien and Sedition Laws*, by "A fellow-citizen of Virginia." (Richmond: 1798.)

PS. Let me pray you to get General Lee's Deed to me, drawn agreeably to your directions, acknowledged before Witnesses; who will prove it in the General Court; and I would thank you for causing this to be done.

My Deed to Lee is also sent, to be dealt with as you and he may deem proper: for further elucidation of this subject, I send (in confidence) my letters to Genl. Lee open for your perusal; after which please to seal and deliver them. You will perceive by the duplicate in what manner I am likely to be plagued on obtaining payment for my Dismal Swamp Land, Sold him, but not conveyed.

***To PHILIP ROOTES**

Mount Vernon, January 5, 1799.

Sir: Your letter of the 15th of November, was received by me whilst I was in Philadelphia, on public business; and too closely engaged to pay attention to matters of private concern. Being but lately returned to this place, must be my apology for not informing you sooner, that the land after which you enquire, as son of Captn. John Rootes deceased, was purchased of your father by the Honble. John Page (then of the Council of this State) for, and on my Account, and

Library of Congress

the full Sum, viz, One hundd pounds (to the best of my recollection) paid for the same, as can be made appear at any time; and the assignment satisfactorily exhibited at the Secretary's Office, on which a warrant issued, and a Patent was granted to Sir Your etc.

***To WILLIAM RUSSELL**

Mount Vernon, January 6, 1799.

Sir: I have been duly favored with your letter of the 20th. Ult. and however desirous I was of receiving the Ram, and the Straw Machine in season, I am well apprised of the difficulties which were opposed to their passage, and must submit to the disappointment, in hopes of obtaining them in time for the next.

Such a ground borer as you describe, will be of singular use to me; and I shall thank you for sending it with the other articles, and the cost thereof; which shall be paid on demand. Having much Posting and railing to do, when the weather will permit, the sooner I could bring this borer into operation the more useful it would be to me.

I pray you to accept my best thanks for your kind wishes, and mine that you may see the return of many happy new Years; being Sir Your etc.

***To ISRAEL SHREVE**

Mount Vernon, January 10, 1799.

Sir: Your letter of the 21st. of last Mo, came to my hands by the last Western Mail: But as to your Brother, I have never seen, nor heard a tittle from him: and to be plain, I never expect to obtain what is due from you, to me, but by a resort to a Court of Justice.

You know full well, because you have often been told it in serious and solemn terms, that the only inducement I had to sell the land on which you live, was necessity; to raise money, to enable me to pay the expences of my public Office; to which the compensation

Library of Congress

was inadequate; and for which I was obliged to have recourse to other means, to effectuate. I am now obliged to borrow money at the Banks, on notes for Sixty days, renewable at the end thereof for 60 days more, and so on; by which I am paying an interest nearly the double of what I shall receive. I appeal to your own judgment therefore to decide, if you think this right; especially, as you sold the greater part of the Land for the double of what you gave me, and had always time to prepare for my demands if proper measures had been pursued to meet them. But there are some people in this world (of which I fear you are one) who from inattention to engagements, or disinclination to pay debts, but by compulsion, that never are, nor never will be prepared, and when this is the case, indulgences are unavailing.

But I have made similar remarks to these, to you so often, that it is unnecessary to repeat them in this place, I shall therefore, and for the last time inform you, that if you

can give the Sheriff satisfactory assurance of his receiving what was due on your judgment Bond last June (according to the Tenor thereof) on or before the first day of April next, this letter deposited in his hands, shall be his authority for staying the proceedings against you in whatever stage it may be till then; beyond which I cannot extend the time.

It is not my wish to ruin, or even to distress your family; but knowing the terms on which you bought the Land, and my motives for selling it, you have no right to distress me by withholding the money, and ought to be as unwilling.

I shall not conclude without informing you in explicit language, that I shall expect the next payment due on the Instalment Bond, when it becomes due (the first of June next) without fail; and expect measures will be taken to accomplish it, instead of resorting to fresh excuses for staving it off. I am etc.

***To PATRICK HENRY**

(Confidential)

Library of Congress

Mount Vernon, January 15, 1799.

Dear Sir: At the threshold of this letter, I ought to make an apology for its contents; but if you will give me credit for my motives, I will contend for no more, however erroneous my sentiments may appear to you.

It would be a waste of time, to attempt to bring to the view of a person of your observation and discernment, the endeavors of a certain party among us, to disquiet the Public mind among us with unfounded alarms; to arraign every act of the Administration; to set the People at variance with their Government; and to embarrass all its measures. Equally useless would it be to predict what must be the inevitable consequences, of such policy, if it cannot be arrested.

Unfortunately, and extremely do I regret it, the State of Virginia has taken the lead in this opposition. I have said the *State*, Because the conduct of its Legislature in the Eyes of the world, will authorise the expression; because it is an incontrovertable fact, that the principle leaders of the opposition dwell in it; and because no doubt is entertained, I believe, that with the help of the Chiefs in other States, all the plans are arranged; and systematically pursued by their followers in other parts of the Union; though in no State except Kentucky (that I have heard of) has Legislative countenance been obtained, beyond Virginia.⁴⁷

It has been said, that the great mass of the Citizens of this State are well affected, notwithstanding, to the General Government, and the Union; and I am willing to believe it, nay do believe it: but how is this to be reconciled with their suffrages at the Elections of Representatives; both to Congress and their State Legislature; who are men opposed to the first, and by the tendency of their measures would destroy the latter? Some among us have endeavoured to account for this inconsistency, and though convinced themselves, of

Library of Congress

its truth, they are unable to convince others; who are unacquainted with the internal policy of the State.

One of the reasons assigned is, that

47. The “Kentucky Resolutions,” so called, were adopted by that legislature Nov. 16, 1798; Virginia adopted similar resolves December 24. The gist of both sets of resolutions was that a State had the right to nullify an act of Congress, to which it did not accede. Thomas Jefferson drafted the Kentucky resolutions, and James Madison those passed by the Virginia legislature. The cause of the adoption of these resolutions was the Alien and Sedition laws.

the most respectable, and best qualified characters amongst us, will not come forward. Easy and happy in their circumstances at home, and believing themselves secure in their liberties and property, will not forsake them, or their occupations, and engage in the turmoil of public business, or expose themselves to the calumnies of their opponents, whose weapons are detraction.

But at such a crisis as this, when every thing dear and valuable to us is assailed; when this Party hangs upon the Wheels of Government as a dead weight, opposing every measure that is calculated for defence and self preservation; abetting the nefarious views of another Nation, upon our Rights; preferring, as long as they durst contend openly against the spirit and resentment of the People, the interest of France to the Welfare of their own Country; justifying the first at the expence of the latter: When every Act of their own Government is tortured by constructions they will not bear, into attempts to infringe and trample upon the Constitution with a view to introduce monarchy; When the most unceasing, and the purest exertion; were making, to maintain a Neutrality which had been proclaimed by the Executive, approved unequivocally by Congress, by the State Legislatures, nay, by the People themselves, in various meetings; and to preserve the Country in Peace, are charged as a measure calculated to favor Great Britain at the expence of France, and all

Library of Congress

those who had any agency in it, are accused of being under the influence of the former; and her Pensioners; When measures are systematically, and pertinaciously pursued, which must eventually

dissolve the Union or produce coercion. I say, when these things are become so obvious, ought characters who are best able to rescue their Country from the pending evil to remain at home? rather, ought they not to come forward, and by their talents and influence, stand in the breach wch. such conduct has made on the Peace and happiness of this Country, and oppose the widening of it?

Vain will it be to look for Peace and happiness, or for the security of liberty or property, if Civil discord should ensue; and what else can result from the policy of those among us, who, by all the means in their power, are driving matters to extremity, if they cannot be counteracted effectually? The views of Men can only be known, or guessed at, by their words or actions. Can those of the *Leaders* of Opposition be mistaken then, if judged by this Rule? That they are *followed* by numbers who are unacquainted with their designs, and suspect as little, the tendency of their principles, I am fully persuaded. But, if their conduct is viewed with indifference; if there is activity and misrepresentation on one side, and supinehess on the other, their numbers, accumulated by Intriguing, and discontented foreigners under proscription, who were at war with their own governments; and the greater part of them with *all* Government, their numbers will encrease, and nothing, short of Omniscience, can foretel the consequences.

I come now, my good Sir, to the object of my letter, which is, to express a hope, and an earnest wish, that you wd.

come forward at the ensuing Elections (if not for Congress, which you may think would take you too long from home) as a candidate for representation, in the General Assembly of this Commonwealth.⁴⁸

Library of Congress

There are, I have no doubt, very many sensible men who oppose themselves to the torrent that carries away others, who had rather swim with, than stem it, without an able Pilot to conduct them; but these are neither old in Legislation, nor well known in the Community. Your weight of character and influence in the Ho. of Representatives would be a bulwark against such dangerous sentiments as are delivered there at present. It would be a rallying point for the timid, and an attraction of the wavering. In a word, I conceive it of immense importance at this Crisis, that you should be there; and I would fain hope that all minor considerations will be made to yield to the measure.

If I have erroneously supposed that your sentiments on these subjects are in unison with mine; or if I have assumed a liberty which the occasion does not warrant, I must conclude as I began, with praying that my motives may be received as an apology; and that my fear, that the tranquillity of the Union, and of this State in particular, is hastening to an awful crisis, has extorted them from me.

With great, and very sincere regard, and respect, I am &c.

48. Henry's answer (February 12) is in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, being one of the letters abstracted from the *Washington Papers* by William B. Sprague. A photostat is in the *Washington Papers*. In it Henry says: "My Children would blush to know, that you and their Father were Cotemporarys, and that when you asked him to throw in his Mite for the public Happiness, he refused to do it."

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, January 20, 1799.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 13th. Inst. has been duly received.

It would oblige me very much if you could procure, and send me by the first opportunity which may offer, One bushel of English, or blue grass seeds, *Fresh* and *good* , without

Library of Congress

which, or if it be defective, or foul, my purpose, which is to sow a Lawn before my door, would not be answered.

If Blue grass-seeds cannot be obtained, send *white* Clover seed, if to be had, of equal quantity as above.

From Mr. Parish I expected two Hats, which may come with the Boots and Book case; the last of which it would be pleasing to receive. Mrs. Washington unites with me in offering the compliments. of the Season to Mrs. Biddle yrself and family. I am etc.

***To SIR JOHN SINCLAIR**

Mount Vernon, January 20, 1799.

Sir: On the 10th. of last July I had the honor to write you a pretty long letter on various subjects, and hearing, some considerable time afterwards, that the Ship (Suffolk) by which it had been sent, was Captured by a French Cruiser, from whence none of my letters ever reach their Address, I did, not long since, transmit a duplicate; which, though unaccompanied with the early Wheat that the above Vessel contained, I hope has met a better fate.

I wish also that the proceedings of the National Board of Agriculture, which you informed me It had the goodness to direct should be neatly bound, and sent to me, may not have fallen into the same rapacious hands; as they have never been received.

It is now sometime since I had the honor to receive your favor of the 6th. of June, accompanying the history of the origin and “progress of the Statistical account of Scotland” for which I pray you to accept my best thanks. That letter should not have remained so long unacknowledged had it not been received a few days before I commenced a journey to Philadelphia on business with the Secretary of War, where I was detained near seven

Library of Congress

weeks, and so closely occupied in the matters which carried me there, as to render all Minor considerations inadmissible.

It is not for me, Sir, to express an opinion with respect to the change in the Presidency of the National Board of Agriculture. I have no doubt but that Lord Somerville is a very meritorious character, and well deserves the honor to which he is

Elected. I am also perfectly well satisfied that no one as far as my opportunities have enabled me to judge, could fill that office with more zeal, more honor to himself, and more usefulness to the Public, than Sir John Sinclair; and none who will merit in a higher degree than himself, the thanks he has received. Happy is it then for the Nation, to possess such characters to chuse from.

No one is more deeply impressed than I am, of the importance of National encouragement to Agriculture. No one can approve more of such an Institution as you have been the promoter of than myself. Nor no one who wishes more ardently than I do, to see such a measure adopted in the United States. but we must look I fear to a more tranquil period for the accomplishment of it; Endeavouring in the mean while, to draw all the advantages we can from the labours of others. With great respect, and sincere esteem etc.

***To REVEREND BRYAN, LORD FAIRFAX**

Mount Vernon, January 20, 1799.

Dear Sir: Since your departure from Mount Eagle, I have been favored with three letters from you.

The first, dated in Hampton Road, June the 17th, came speedily to hand; the 2d, begun on the 21st. and ended the 23d. of August, in London and the 3d. from York of the 7th. of September, have also

Library of Congress

been received at the following times viz. That from York, a day or two before I commenced a journey for Philadelphia on the 4th of November, and the other from London, a few days after my return from thence, on the 20th of December.

For the details contained in these several letters, I pray you to accept my thanks; and congratulations on your safe arrival in England, although the Passage, on the whole, was not altogether as expeditious and agreeable as you expected. To this prayer, let me add my best wishes for the perfect restoration of your health, and the accomplishment of such other objects as might have induced you to undertake the Voyage. After which it would give your friends in this Country much pleasure to hail your return.

For your care of the letters I took the liberty of committing to you, my grateful acknowledgments are offered.

When I presented my Valedictory address to the People of the United States, in September 1796, I little thought that any event would occur in my day that could again withdraw me from the Retirement after which I had been so long panting; but we know little of ourselves, and still less of the ways of Providence. The injurious treatment this Country had received from France, in an open violation of the Treaty between the two Countries, and of the Laws of Nations. The Insults and Indignities with which all our Overtures for an amicable adjustment of the disputes were treated. The increasing depredations on our Commerce, accompanied with outrage and threats, if we did not comply with their demands, leaving no hope of obtaining

restitution for the past, or preserving the little that remained, or the Country from Invasion, but by the adoption of vigorous measures for self-defence having come fully to the view of the People, their resentments have been roused, and with one voice as it were, have made a tender of their lives and fortunes to repel any attempts which may be made on the Constitution or Government of their Country. In consequence of which, and to be prepared for the dernier resort, if unhappily we shall be driven to it, Troops are to be raised, and

Library of Congress

the United States placed in a Posture of defence. Under these circumstances, and it appearing to be the wish of my Countrymen, and the request of the governing Powers that I should take charge of their Armies, I am embarked so far in the business as will appear by my letter to the President of the 13th. of July last; which, as it has run through all the Newspapers here and Published in many of the Foreign Gazettes, you probably may have seen; and though still at home, where indeed I hope to remain, under a persuasion that the French will discover the injustice and absurdity of their conduct, I hold myself in readiness to gird on the Sword, if the emergency shall require it.

Notwithstanding the Spirit of the People is so animated, that party among us who have been uniform in their opposition to all the measures of Government; in short to every Act, either of Executive or Legislative Authority, which seemed to be calculated to defeat French usurpations, and to lessen the influence of that Nation in our Country, hang upon, and clog its wheels as much

as in them lye; and with a rancour, and virulence which is scarcely to be conceived. torturing every act, by unnatural construction, into a design to violate the Constitution, Introduce monarchy, and to establish an Aristocracy, and what is more to be regretted, the same Spirit seems to have laid hold of the major part of the Legislature of this State, while all the other States in the Union (Kentucky, the child of Virginia, excepted) are coming forward with the most unequivocal evidences of their approbation of the measures which have been adopted by both, for self preservation. In what such a spirit, and such proceedings will issue, is beyond the reach of short sighted man to predict, with any degree of certainty. I hope well; because I have always believed, and trusted, that that Providence which has carried us through a long and painful War with one of the most powerful Nations in Europe, will not suffer the discontented among ourselves, to produce more than a temporary interruption to the permanent Peace and happiness of this rising Empire. That they have been the cause of our present disquietudes, and the means of Stimulating (by mis-representing the Sentiments of the mass of Citizens of this Country) the Directory of France to their unwarrantable Acts, not from more real affection

Library of Congress

to the Nation than others possess, but to facilitate the design of subverting their own government, I have no more doubt than that I am now in the act of writing you this letter.

It was at the request of the Secretary of War, my Journey to Philadelphia was undertaken, to assist in the formation of the Augmented Force

and to effect some other Military arrangements; and although your letter from York of the 7th. of September came to hand before I set out, and was taken with me to be acknowledged from thence, yet my time, and attention, was so much occupied with the business that carried me there, that I never found leisure to do it.

Lady Huntington as you may have been told was a correspondent of mine, and did me the honor to claim me as a relation; but in what degree, or by what connexion it came to pass, she did not inform me, nor did I ever trouble her Ladyship with an enquiry. The favourable sentiments which others, you say, have been pleased to express respecting me, cannot but be pleasing to a mind [*sic*] who always walked on a straight line, and endeavoured as far as human frailties, and perhaps strong passions, would enable him, to discharge the relative duties to his Maker and fellow-men, without seeking any indirect or left handed attempts to acquire popularity.

Our Crops of Wheat and Indian Corn last year (except in places) were extremely short. The drought of the Autumn exceeded any thing that has been recollected, insomuch that the Mills were scarcely able to work before New Years day, and the Fly has again begun its ravages on the Wheat in the Counties above us. This calamity, with the severity of the Drought on the Fall seeding, has given a discouraging aspect to the ensuing Crop of Winter Grain.

We have the pleasure, frequently, of seeing or hearing from Mrs. Fairfax; and on Wednesday last, Mrs. Washington and myself took a family

Library of Congress

dinner at Mount Eagle, and left all the family in good health and Spirits in the afternoon. Miss Custis was, at that time, with her Mother at Hope Park, or she would have accompanied us on that visit. She is now returned, and unites with Mrs. Washington and myself in offering best wishes for your health and safe return. And with very great, and sincere esteem etc.

P. S. Finding that I could not comprise what I had to say in one sheet of Paper, I have rambled on until I have almost filled a second.

***To ROBERT LEWIS**

Mount Vernon, January 23, 1799.

Dear Sir: It is quite time that you shd. determine whether you will take *Young Royal Gift* to cover at your House the ensuing Season, or not; that he may be advertised accordingly.

And for your information it is necessary to add that, he is rather slow in covering; indeed will not cover at all, unless there is a Jenny by, to excite and stimulate him to the Act. He is now in his prime being 7 years old, spring coming and about 13½ hands high; Son of Royal Gift, out of one of the Imported Jennies, from Malta. If you take the Jack, and have no female Asses in your neighbourhood, it will be necessary to take one or two from hence; and this perhaps would be the safest and best mode.

Some very careful person should have the

care of them on the Road; the contrary of which, occasioned the loss of the old Spanish Jack. Let me hear from you on this subject as soon as you can, after this letter gets to hand, that I may know, in time, whether *young Royal Gift* is to be advertised for covering *here* , or *with you* .

Library of Congress

It would be very convenient and acceptable thing, for me to receive my Rents, or even a part of them, at as early a period as you can furnish me with them. On what I supposed, at the time, a moral certainty of receiving considerable payments (before Christmas) for Lands I had disposed of, I have entered into a Contract for building two houses in the Federal City (for the accommodation of Congress, the members I mean,) and am obliged by that Contract to make considerable advances of money this Winter, and early in the Spring; which I shall not be enabled to do, under the above disappointments, without having recourse to borrowing from the Bank (at its ruinous interest) unless I can be aided by my Rents, and other resources on which I did not calculate. Let me know what dependence I can place on the first.

How far does Major Harrison, who owns the land near my Mill, live from you?

The latter end of October, or beginning of November last, (dated I perceive the 4th. of Novembr.) I wrote him a letter of which the enclosed is a Press Copy, taken at the time. But never having heard from him since, the presumption is, it never reached his hands, or an acknowledgment of it, at least, would have been made. If you should see Majr. Harrison, show him

the Copy, and ask what answer he is disposed to give it. The family here are all well, and unite in best regards to Mrs. Lewis and yourself, with Dear Sir Your etc.

***To FRANCIS DEAKINS**

Mount Vernon, January 25, 1799.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 16th. instant enclosing one from Mr. Hesekiah Veatch of the 1st. of December last, with a statement of the A/c against Mr. Charles McDavitt is received.

Library of Congress

Your directions to, Mr. Veatch's proceedings in consequence thereof, respecting the mode of obtaining the Rent due from McDavitt, were very proper, and are very satisfactory to me. The Bond of the latter may either remain in Mr. Veatch's hands, or yours, as you shall judge best, to be acted upon when it becomes due.

I have received also, enclosed in your letter, a Hogshead of Tobacco, on account of Rent due to me from Mrs. Priscilla Beall, as pr. receipt enclosed; and feel very much obliged by your kind attention to my interest in these matters. With very great esteem etc.

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, January 29, 1799.

Dear Sir: When I wrote to you a few days ago for Blue grass-seed, and if that could not be had, then white clover seed in equal quantity; I expected to have finished a piece of ground sufficiently large to receive it. despairing of this *now* and keeping seed over the year is not a good practice. I request, if you have not *already* purchased a bushel of the one, or the other, as then mentioned, that the quantity may not exceed [25 lbs.]⁶⁸ of which ever of the kind that is sent. If it be purchased, however I am ready to receive the whole quantity.

Conceiving I must now be in your debt, if you will transmit the a/c, I will pay the balance as soon as known. With esteem etc.

***To WILLIAM THORNTON**

Mount Vernon, January 30, 1799.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 28th. instant, enclosing Deeds for my Lots in the Federal City, and Messrs. Blagden and Lenthal's estimate and drawing of the Windows, dressed in the manner proposed, came to my hands yesterday.

Library of Congress

The drawing sent, gives a much handsomer appearance to the Windows than the original design did; and I am more disposed to encounter the difference of expence, than to lessen the exterior shew of the building, and therefore consent to the proposed alteration.

68. Blank in the press copy. The "25 lbs." is supplied from the "Letter Book" in the *Washington Papers*.

At the foot of the estimate sent me (relatively to the Windows) is an application for 152, two inch sash pullies (brass wheels in iron frames) and two groce of 7/8th. Inch Screws. Be so good as to direct Mr. Blagden to purchase these articles on the best terms, and of such sorts as will suit him. And also to employ a Painter to prime the Sashes and Doors, although I know it will cost me five times as much as I could do it for myself. The job is too small to send a Person from hence for that purpose only.

As a Pump will, ultimately, be necessary for the Well, it may as well be fixed there *now* as hereafter, remembering in the construction thereof, that it be calculated to serve both houses.

I do not clearly comprehend how it should come to pass, that the Specification of the Work, should be at variance with the Plan of the Buildings. I had always conceived that when a Plan was exhibited and agreed to, that it gave the precise dimensions, and that the only use of the former was to ascertain the cost, and to explain the manner, in which the work was to be executed. Professing myself, however, to be a Novice in these matters, I shall readily conform to whatever you shall think right; and so I will do if any thing else of a similar nature should occur, in prosecuting the Work.

If a change in the Windows, should affect the size of the glass, I ought to be informed of it in time; indeed without delay; that no error may be committed in providing the latter.

Library of Congress

Is my Deed for the Lot on which I am building, yet in the City Office, or have I mislaid it? I do not find it among the others. Complimts. and best wishes. etc.⁶⁹

69. From the original in the *Thornton Papers* in the Library of Congress.

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, February 1, 1799.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 27th. Ult. was received last Night. As the whole quantity of Blue-grass seed was purchased before my last letter to you got to hand, it may be sent on without diminution.

Let it be accompanied, if to be had fresh and good, with twelve pounds of White clover seed; and the like quantity of Lucern. You will remark how pointed I am with respect to the goodness and quality of the seeds I buy; the reason is, that no imposition upon a Farmer is felt so sorely as that of foul, and defective seeds; because it deranges a whole system, besides occasioning the loss of a year in his plans.

If Captn. Ellwood would heave to when off my house; or send a Boat a shore, which would be more certain, I would send off my Boat wch. would bring the Book cases without delay. I am etc.

[H.S.P.]

***To SIR UVEDAILE PRICE⁸⁴**

Mount Vernon (in Virginia), February 5, 1799.

Sir: At the sametime that I pray you to accept my thanks for your polite, and obliging favour of the 31st of March in the past year, it becomes necessary that I should apologize for

Library of Congress

what, otherwise, might carry with it the appearance of inattention to your kindness, in sending me your Essay on

84. Of Foxley, Herefordshire, England.

the "Picturesque."

This Work, Sir, did not reach my hands until within a few days; which will account for my silence 'till now.

The subject is curious, and I persuade myself I shall read the two Volumes with pleasure and edification in my first leisure moments. In the meantime I have the honor etc.

***To CLEMENT BIDDLE**

Mount Vernon, January 23, 1799.

Dear Sir: In my last, written to you a few days ago, I intended, but forgot it, to enquire what price flour and Wheat bore in your Market.

I would thank you for giving these in your next. There used to be the prices current in one of the Gazettes of Philadelphia, which, tho' a very useful thing, seems to be discontinued. Let me pray you therefore, when at any time you may have occasion to write to me, to mention the price of the above Articles, and whether they are likely to rise or fall.

As a Farmer, Wheat and Flour constitute my principal concerns; it behoves me therefore to dispose of them upon the best terms. I am etc.

[H.S.P.]

***To GOVERNOR JONATHAN TRUMBULL**

Mount Vernon, February 6, 1799.

Library of Congress

My dear Sir: By the Ship Nancy from London, just arrived at Alexandria; I have received four copies of the Prints of the Deaths of Montgomery and Warren (the number of setts I presume I subscribed for)⁸⁷ sent me by your Brother.⁸⁸

It is my wish to make him a remittance agreeably to the terms of the Subscription; but having taken no copy of it, and not being able to recollect what is to pay, must be my apology for troubling you with this letter: presuming that the original Paper or a copy thereof, might have been left with you; and moreover, that you may be empowered to receive from the Subscribers in the *United States*, the amount of their subscriptions, in which case, upon receiving the advice, I shall, instead of making the remittance of mine to London, transmit it to you.

Whether any thing was to have been paid in advance, and whether in that case I paid mine, is more than I can decide without a resort (for the latter) to my Papers from Philadelphia, which are yet to be unpacked, and arranged.⁸⁹

By a Paper accompanying the Prints of Montgomery and Warren, the other part of the original design is suspended, on account of the peculiarity of the times.

As I shall not write to Mr. Trumbull until I hear from you, the sooner you can make it convenient to give me the information herein required, the more agreeable it will be.

I enquire frequently after you, and with pleasure hear always that you enjoy good health. Mrs. Washington who is as well as usual, and Nelly Custis who on my birthday (the 22d. instant) will change her name for that of Lewis, a Nephew

⁸⁷. A set of these prints (the one of the death of Warren is better known as the Battle of Bunker Hill), the property of Walter G. Peter, of Washington, D. C., is in the Washington Collection in the National Museum. One set was hung in the "new room" (Banquet Hall) and one set in the central hall of Mount Vernon.

Library of Congress

88. John Trumbull.

89. Washington had already paid half of the subscription (3 guineas) for two sets of the prints on Apr. 17, 1790 (*Cf.* Washington's letter to Joseph Anthony, Sept. 30, 1799, *post.*)

of mine, and brother to those who lived with me in New York and Philadelphia, unite in best wishes and respectful compliments to Mrs. Trumbull and yourself, with My dear Sir etc.

***To WILLIAM B. HARRISON**

Mount Vernon, February 6, 1799.

Sir: I have received your letter of the 24th. Ult., and thank you for your kind assurance of suffering no tenant to remain on your land (near my Mill) who is a nuisance to me.

But it was from a thorough conviction in my mind that no person, or persons, who meant to get a livelihood by dint of labour. In short who did not depend more upon slight of hand, and unwarrantable shifts than labour, for a support, who would live on it in the exhausted state in which it is, that induced me to propose becoming your tenant, for the whole tract.

To this application of mine, your letter gives no answer; which is the cause of my giving you the trouble of the second Letter; forasmuch, if you are inclined to lease the Land to met for a term of years (and I could not take it on a short one, for the reasons mentioned in my last) I may know on what conditions; and if agreeable, be making my arrangements accordingly for the next year.

You will be able to judge, without any observations of mine, whether it will not be for your interest, and the advantage of the Land, that the whole

should be in the hands of one persons who will pay the rent regularly as it becomes due, without trouble; and who, by proper inclosures (the fencing of which I should be obliged

Library of Congress

to do with timber from my own land) wd. be improving, instead of rendering it less and less valuable every year, leaving it totally divested of even firewood, or any thing to support it, in the manner, and under the circumstances it now is, and is going on. I say your own good sense will enable you to judge of these matters as well as can. All I request is, to be informed, whether you will lease the land to me, or not; and in the former case, on what terms; being certain that my enclosures will forever be subject to depredations while the tenements are in the hands of persons who cannot support their families by fair and honest labour, without being in a starving condition great part of the year.

With respect to John Javins I have nothing particular to charge him with; nor do I know any thing with which to impeach his honesty. Nor am I able to fix by legal proof anything against the others; but certain it is the best fences I can make are no proof against their hogs &ca.; and my meadows and grain are continually destroyed by their Stocks. And it is not less certain that my Stock (of Hogs and Sheep in particular) are constantly diminishing and while one of the Pools has no visible way of raising them, sells more things than any person of his condition in the County. In a word, I have lately been told that he keeps a tipling house which is a receptacle for such articles as Negros can steal from their Owners. I am etc.

***To THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Mount Vernon, February 10, 1799.

Dear Sir: Your letters of the 24th of the last, and 2d of the present month, 90 have been duly received; for which, and their enclosures, I thank you.

I am not surprised that some Members of the Ho. of Representatives should dis-relish your Report. It contains remarks, and speaks truths which they are desirous should be unknown to the People. I wish the parts which were left out, had been retained. The crisis, in my opinion, calls loudly for plain dealing; that the Citizens at large may be well informed, and decide, with respect to public measures, upon a thorough knowledge of

Library of Congress

facts. *Concealment* is a species of mis-information; and misrepresentation and false alarms found the ground work of opposition. The plan of wch. is, to keep the People as much as possible in ignorance and terror; for it is believed by themselves, that a perfect understanding of our *real* situation, in regard to our foreign relations would be a death blow to their consequence and struggles; and for that reason, have always something *on foot* to disquiet the public mind.

I am sorry to hear that Mr. Gerry is pursuing a mischevous path. That he was led stray by his own vanity and self importance and was the dupe of *Diplomatic Skill* , I never had a doubt; but these doubts were accompanied by feint hopes (feint indeed they were) that he possessed candour, fortitude and manliness enough to have come forward with an open declaration that, he had been practised upon, and was deceiv'd. But

90. Pickering has stated: "I...inclose copies of the President's communications to Congress on the 18th and 21st of January, concerning French affairs. In my report, I had noticed (in as gentle terms as possible) Mr. Gerry's conduct, as wrong in principle, and in many particulars very reprehensible: but these (contrary to my wishes) were omitted. There was one omission which I deemed important to retain, as it was the text of my observations on Mr. Gerry's strange opinion of the sincerity of Talleyrand in his *talks* of negotiation prior to the arrival of the Envoys dispatches in Europe. For your own eye, I have inserted in the copy of my report now inclosed, the passages referred to, as I had written them. It was this absurd but mischievous opinion which suggested to me the necessity of making a report on those communications: I call it mischievous, because many will read and respect that opinion without examining and discovering that it is without foundation. Mr. Gerry's whole letter is calculated to apologize for his improper conduct: so improper as to be inexcusable; and of this he is apparently conscious; and hence his laboured but weak attempt to justify it." A photostat of the original, through the courtesy of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, of New York City, is in the *Washington Papers*.

Library of Congress

Mr. Gerry's mind is not enlarged enough for such conduct as this; especially, assailed as I presume it was on his arrival, by those whose labours are unceasing, to inculcate their doctrines of hostility against the proceedings of their own government.

The Session of Congress is drawing fast to a close; what traits it will leave behind of strong, and energetic measures, remains times to negotiate upon, fair and honorable terms, but never to be bullied or duped. With very great esteem etc.